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# **Teachers' and Students' Perceived Difficulties in Implementing Communicative Language Teaching in Bangladesh: A critical Study**

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## **Declaration**

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged. This thesis has not been submitted to the Open University or to any other institute for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

## **Abstract**

This thesis investigates teachers' and students' perceived difficulties in implementing communicative language teaching (CLT) in English language classes in Bangladeshi secondary schools. It examines the extent to which factors both from the teachers and students perspective contribute to these difficulties.

This study used multiple methods to explore teacher and student practices and perceptions regarding CLT (Golafshani, 2003), and it was influenced by an ethnographical approach (Denzin, 1994; Jeffrey and Troman, 2004; Hammersley, 2006). Quantitative methods such as statistical analysis of classroom observation data have been used alongside qualitative methods such as thematic analysis of interview data.

Classroom observation reveals that teachers apply only minimal CLT principles in their classroom practice. Interview data reveal that there were two major perceived difficulties in implementing CLT in the classroom: pedagogical difficulties and environmental and personal difficulties. The factors that contribute to perceived pedagogical difficulties include insufficient training for both pre-service and in-service teachers; low English proficiency; inconsistency between the CLT approach and the national examination system; teachers' orientation to traditional methods; the role of private tuition; isolated grammar practice; separation of female and male students in the school, and teachers' lack of familiarity with general teaching techniques. Interviews also reveal that environmental and personal difficulties are perceived to inhibit CLT classroom instruction.

In order to work towards the provision of quality English language teaching in Bangladesh, this thesis reflects on the significant barriers to implementing CLT in Bangladeshi secondary schools and considers the steps that need to be taken to better prepare teachers



for teaching English in this and other similar contexts. A thorough understanding of the multiple pedagogical, environmental and personal difficulties that teachers and students face in the English language classroom will help teacher educators and policy makers understand the complexity of implementing pedagogical change in this context.

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## **List of Frequent acronyms**

ADB- Asian Development Bank

BANBEIS – Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics

BISE- Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education

BEd – Bachelor of Education

CLT - Communicative Language Teaching

DfID - Department for International Development

GDP- Gross Domestic Product

DSHE - Directorate of Secondary and Higher secondary Education

EFL – English as Foreign Language

EFT – English For Today

EL – English lLanguage

ELT – English Language Teaching

ESL – English as Second Language

ELTIP - English Language Teaching Improvement Project

EIA - English in Action

ETTE- English for Teaching, Teaching for English

EME – English Medium Education

GTM – Grammar Translation Method

JSC – Junior School Certificate

L1 – Mother tongue

L2 – Target langue

MDGs - Millennium Development Goals

**MoE – Ministry of Education**

**NAEM - National Academy for Education Management**

**NCTB – National Curriculum and Textbook Board**

**OU – Open University**

**SEQAEP - Secondary Education Quality and Access Enhancement Project**

**SSC - Secondary School Certificate**

**TG – Teacher Guide**

**TQI-SEP - Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project**

**TTCs – Teacher Training Colleges**

# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This research project aims to investigate teachers' and students' perceived difficulties in implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Bangladesh's secondary educational context. To undertake this research study I adopted an ethnographical qualitative approach. Given the view of this approach I applied multiple methods- a questionnaire survey, observation, interview, group interview, field notes, documents and photographs in order to collect data. This chapter discusses the rationale and significance of the research study that I undertook in the context of Bangladesh secondary schools. It discusses the objectives of the study and the research questions and explains the scope of the research. Finally this chapter presents an overview of the chapters in the thesis.

## **1.2 Rationale and significance**

In this section I will discuss the contextual rationale of this study. This section also includes a discussion of my background: my personal and professional experiences and their influences on this research study.

### **1.2.1 Contextual rationale**

In the following, I will discuss the current situation of English language teaching at secondary level education in Bangladesh. This discussion includes a brief history of language learning in Bangladesh, methods of ELT, ideologies of implementing CLT, the current scenario of teacher education and training, resources, and the examination system. At present in Bangladesh approximately 3% of people speak in English and this population predominantly belongs to capital city Dhaka and some other metropolitan areas (Banu & Sussex, 2001a; Hossain & Tollefson, 2007; Thompson, 2007). While this may not be a high figure, the English language is firmly established in Bangladesh, as in other South



Asian countries, as a means to social, cultural and economic progress and prosperity (Banu & Sussex, 2001a).

The independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971 played a significant role to change the status and role of English in Bangladesh. In the early 1970s, language policies reduced the role of English significantly because of the Language Movement in 1952 (Banu & Sussex, 2001a; Hamid, 2006b). In 1974 the Ministry of Education declared Bangla as 'the medium of instruction at all levels of education' (Ministry of Education, 1974, p. 15). The government passed an order which introduced Bangla as a medium of internal communication in government, autonomous and semi-government offices (Alam, 2002, p. 525). At a later stage, in 1987, Bangla was reinforced by the 'Bengali Introduction Law' (Banu & Sussex, 2001a; Rahman, 1999). The Act made it clear that 'Bengali was to be used in all spheres and at all levels for government purposes' (Banu & Sussex, 2001a, p. 126). Despite the official introduction of Bangla, English has always had a place of prominence alongside Bangla in government administration, education and in law. Khan (2002) claims that 'currently English in Bangladesh is used for interpersonal, professional, academic, commercial as well as recreational purposes like all other developing countries' (p. 328). The use of English will be further discussed in section 2.2.2.

Since Bangladesh achieved its independence in 1971, English has been a compulsory subject for students at every level of schooling from primary to tertiary. After independence, the Bangladeshi government implemented the Grammar-translation method (GTM) for teaching and learning English. This was a teacher-centred approach: the role of students was passive, grammar was taught in isolation, the primary focus was on reading and writing skills, and students were asked to solve grammatical problems. ELT classrooms were not interactive. In describing this context, Sarwar (2008) asserts that the previously used GTM method was deductive and students were taught only to perform well in examinations. Teaching was mainly focused on grammar, for example, activities

that focus on filling in the gaps, the right forms of verbs, prepositions and translation from L1 (Mother tongue) to L2 (Target language). In the examinations, questions were designed mainly to test students' writing skills or grammatical knowledge not listening, speaking or reading skills (2008: 2).

But after almost two decades, policy makers felt that this method was failing to achieve communicative purposes. Meanwhile the importance of English was growing rapidly in Bangladesh particularly in science and technology, to produce a better work force and in order to participate in higher study (Hassan, 2011). As a result, at the national level, emphasis was given to English so that students could communicate in English for various purposes, e.g. education, science, technology and foreign employment. Imam claims that, 'Being nationally competent in English is one necessary condition if Bangladesh is to move up the long curve of economic growth from its low starting point' (2005:474). Findings suggest that Bangladeshi students are also keen to learn English for higher studies and better jobs at home and abroad (EIA, 2009c; EIA, 2009d; Hassan, 2011). In line with these findings, many scholars further claim that English language skills provide an opportunity for individual development and enhance the way for the country into world economic system (Seargeant and Erling, 2011; Erling and Seargeant, 2013). Moreover, Banu and Sussex (2001) claim that English is an important factor for individual's education and job prospects. Hamid (2010) also considers English skills as a crucial factor for developing human resources.

a crucial factor for developing human resources In this context in the late 1990s, GTM was replaced with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in secondary English classes given the view that it would help develop students' communicative competence, improve English teaching and learning, and raise English ability at the national level (Hamid, 2010; Hamid, 2005; Hamid and Baldauf, 2008; NCTB, 2002). The NCTB further reports that the main aims of implementing CLT were to develop 'communicative competence in English

language among secondary education leavers', which would ultimately strengthen the 'human resource efforts' of the government (NCTB, 2003, p. 3).

However, evidence suggests that classroom practice has not changed to any significant level. For example, the EIA Baseline Study (2009a) reports that most classroom instruction 'did not encourage a communicative approach to learning English' (EIA 2009b, p2). Classroom practices were teacher-centred; teachers talked most of the time and their use of language was mainly Bangla. Students were given few opportunities to participate in the classroom but very few students spoke in English during the lesson. In most classes students were 'not interactive at all' (EIA 2009a, p.8). An EIA study (2009b) observed 252 primary and secondary English language lessons and reported similar problems:

The pedagogic approach adopted in most lessons observed did not encourage a communicative approach to learning English. Throughout the lessons, teaching from the blackboard or front of the class was the predominant pedagogic approach. As the lessons progressed, teachers tended to read from the textbook, ask closed questions or move around the classroom monitoring and facilitating students as they worked individually (EIA, 2009b: 2).

In other studies, findings suggest that ELT classroom practices still rely on traditional grammar-translation methods (TQI-SEP, 2007; Anwar, 2005; Hamid and Baldauf, 2008; Hamid, 2010; Hassan, 2011; Chowdhury and Phan Le Ha, 2008). The government of Bangladesh gives priority to education and has been trying to improve the English language teaching situation within its limited resources. However, the budget allocated for the education sector is usually spent on teacher salaries and school infrastructure development. Because of financial limitation schools cannot provide the needed teaching and learning aids and library facilities (Hamid, 2010). Teachers mainly use the textbook, the blackboard, chalk and duster in the classroom instruction (Hassan, 2011). As a baseline survey of secondary schools in rural Bangladesh reported:

Physical conditions of most of the schools were miserable: poor classroom environment, poor furniture (inappropriate, broken and inadequate), insufficient (or non-existent) library and laboratory facility and finally poor and uncared surroundings (Hoq, 2004, p.52).

The TQI study also reports that the majority of secondary schools do not have adequate teachers, furniture, classrooms, or a suitable learning and teaching environment. Furthermore, teachers are overloaded with many consecutive classes (TQI-SEP, 2007), which most likely raises barriers to quality teaching. In addition, Hamid and Baldauf claim, that 'The alarming rate of failure of rural students in English is customarily attributed to English school teachers and other school factors' (2008: 21). This seems to be a problem for the education system in general, although rural schools are particularly affected. Hamid also claims that 'inadequate infrastructure, limited resources and underqualified teachers result in poor quality of teaching and learning of English' (2010:293).

English teacher education and training is one of the major concerns of implementing innovation in ELT policies; however, in several English teaching contexts, for example in South-East Asia, English teacher education and training have not been effective in fully improving ELT practices (see, for example, Nunan, 2003; Qi, 2009; Wedell, 2008). In Bangladesh, sixty thousand (60.000) English teachers are engaged in junior and secondary schools (BANBEIS 2006). The Bangladeshi government tried to encourage these English teachers to practise CLT classroom instructions, but its teacher education and training scenario has not for the most part been successful. Evidence clearly suggests that Bangladesh lacks adequate capacity- resources or academic knowhow- to maintain the quantity and quality of teacher education and training (Hamid, 2010). Hamid further claims that none of the teachers in his study had opportunities to 'practise English or engage in professional development activities. Although they were required to follow CLT, they admitted to having little knowledge of the popular English teaching approach' (2010:297).

In addition, teachers' low English language proficiency is obvious in a Baseline survey of Secondary School English Teaching and Learning. The study reported:

In the Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs), the majority of the trainees (80%) cannot be considered proficient as teachers in material taught at Class 8 (i.e. they scored less than 75% on the class test), yet they are expected to teach up to Class 10. Of these trainees, over a quarter are failing to reach the minimum level of proficiency (50%) required for students.

The results indicate continued low levels of English language proficiency throughout the secondary school and teacher training levels. In the non-government rural schools, the situation can only be described as desperate (cited in Rahman, 2007: 80).

Several projects (see Section 2.2.3.3.5) have been implemented to provide training to school English teachers and to improve and enhance English teaching. However, regardless of these initiatives taken to improve the situation, teachers' and students' English performance still remains low (EIA, 2009a; Hamid and Baldauf, 2008; Nath et al., 2007). In addition, questions arise about the usefulness of teacher training and its application in the teaching context. The consequences are described in an editorial that appeared in a national English newspaper:

Indeed, when one observes the state of English in Bangladesh, one cannot but be appalled at what has been going on outside the capital. It is especially in the district towns and thanas the predicament faced by teachers and students alike in the matter of a good teaching of the English language has assumed stark form in recent years. (*New Age*, 22 March 2005).

Teacher qualifications, training and language skills are a major problem of introducing CLT in Bangladesh (Hamid, 2005; Hamid & Baldauf, 2008; Anwar, 2005; EIA, 2009a; Chowdhury and Phan Le Ha, 2008; Nath et al., 2007; Rahman, 2007).

Furthermore, evidence suggests that in the secondary school certificate (SSC) examination, a high number of students fail in English (Hamid, 2005; SEQAEP, 2010). Moreover, students' fear of English also affects their learning and performance in examinations (Hussain, 2008; SEQAEP, 2010). In 2007, 30% students failed in English (*Prothom Alo*, 2007). The Chairman of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE), Dhaka claims that, 'The percentage of pass is decreased due to bad performance in English' (*Prothom Alo*, 2009). In addition, the chairman of BISE, Comilla claims, 'From this instance it is clear that English is the determining factor of pass and fail in the examination and the failure rate in English is high in all boards' (*Prothom Alo*, 2009).

Research studies such as Hamid & Baldauf (2008) found an inconsistency between the examination system and CLT pedagogy. Despite efforts to introduce CLT, in the assessment process only the skills of reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar are tested, and there are no opportunities to test the essential skills of speaking and listening. Hassan (2011) shows that teachers may be able to practise communicative methods, as they are able to in the presence of an observer. However, generally they do not apply communicative techniques in the ELT classroom, perhaps in part because they have no bearing on students' success in exams.

This situation in which English language teaching has been deemed so important for individual and national development and yet efforts to improve teaching and learning have continually failed, influenced me to undertake this research. My background: personal and professional experiences have also inspired me: In the following section I will detail my personal and professional experiences regarding ELT in Bangladesh and their impact on pursuing this study.

### **1.2.2 Personal and professional significance**

My experiences of learning and teaching English greatly inspired me to choose this area of research. My loving parents, who are no longer in this world, had a great aspiration to

provide their children with better education so that we could avail of a better life. As part of this, they always encouraged me to learn English. They believed that if I learned English I could achieve higher education and better jobs in the future. As a result, from very early on, I have been devoted to learning English, as I have always believed it would change my life and that by learning it I could be more educated than others in my village. But learning English was difficult for me. When I was a student of Grade 8, I used to walk three miles a day to go for English private tuition, which was a considerable cost for my parents. I was so inspired and motivated that cold and rough weather could not prevent me from going to my lessons. Due to my motivation, and the extra support I got from private tuition, I always scored very well in English subjects, which were all about mechanical practices. The assessment system was based on grammatical forms, reading comprehension, and writing tasks. We did not have opportunities for listening and speaking practice in the classrooms. Moreover, as a rural student we did not have a good teaching and learning environment at school. The English learning environment was particularly poor. The context in which I was educated influenced me to do this research, as I have always wanted to make a contribution to improving this situation.

Apart from learning experiences, my teaching experience has also influenced me to undertake this study. After completing my graduation and post-graduation in English in Aligarh Muslim University, India, I started my career as a college English teacher in Bangladesh. This gave me a real opportunity to see the problems and difficulties of English teaching and learning at the higher secondary level. As an English teacher I was reflective about the lessons that I taught in the class. I also observed students' activities and performance in the class. In addition, I used to talk to students about their study and personal interest. This experience helps inform me about their problems and difficulties, for example their poor English skills, inconsistent examination system, shortage of teaching aids, family and environmental problems. In addition, I had an opportunity to

work with secondary school English teachers as a part-time teacher trainer in the PACE programme (Post Primary and Continuing Education). I worked with English teachers in several districts in Bangladesh. This experience allowed me to see and understand teachers' problems and difficulties more closely. During the training session, it seemed that teachers are poor in English skills, lack knowledge of classroom pedagogy and CLT. In an informal conversation with teachers, I came to know their problems such as insufficient training and resources, lack of suitable teaching environment and being poorly paid. Further, as a university English language teacher, I noticed students' poor performance in English, which was rooted in their background education at secondary level. Furthermore, during my eight years teaching at Chittagong University of Engineering & Technology (CUET), I gathered various experiences about English teaching and learning that gave me a new realization about English education, for example course and curriculum design, material development, teaching approach, resources, testing and evaluation processes in Bangladesh. All these experiences worked as a source of inspirations for me to pursue this research, as I hoped this study could contribute to improving ELT in Bangladesh.

### **1.3 Aim of this study**

This study investigated the CLT classroom in secondary school education in Bangladesh, keeping in view the following four aims:

- To explore teachers' ostensible difficulties implementing CLT in secondary school in Bangladesh.
- To investigate the factors that form teachers' perceptions and beliefs about these problems and difficulties.
- To investigate apparent difficulties of Bangladeshi secondary school learners when practicing CLT in the classroom.
- To find out learner's attitudes and perceptions with regard to CLT classroom practices



## **1.4 Research questions**

In line with the aforementioned rationale, the aims and objectives of the study were to explore the following research questions:

- What perceptions of difficulties do English teachers in Bangladesh secondary schools hold about CLT principles and practice?
- What factors are responsible for shaping teachers' perceptions?
- What barriers and challenges do Bangladeshi secondary school learners face in terms of CLT principles and practice?
- What are learner's attitudes and perceptions with regard to CLT classroom practices?

In the above sections, I have explained the rationale of the study; its contextual grounds and my personal and professional motivations. I also presented aims and research questions of the study. In the next sections I will discuss the scope of the study.

## **1.5 Scoping the study**

This section situates the research that I undertook. My MRes research project and work with the OU research team created the scope for doing this research work.

### **1.5.1 My MRes study**

For my MRes study, I focused on classroom practice to assess critically how far English language teaching is in line with principles and practices of communicative language teaching in Bangla-medium secondary school education in Bangladesh. I also focused on exploring the factors, which may affect teachers' ability to apply CLT in Bangla-medium secondary schools. The findings of my MRes study helped me to design the present study. I found many problems in the uptake of CLT in Bangladeshi secondary schools, such as lack of qualified teachers, insufficient teacher training, frequent changes of syllabus, materials, texts and the pedagogic strategies that are rearranged every year (Hassan, 2011).

All teachers whom I observed and interviewed favour CLT for their classroom practices. But, the paradox is that they only tried to practice CLT in the researcher's presence. In an interview a student said,

They actually do not practice CLT. CLT is very good for us and we can share our ideas and we can learn easily, but we practice this rarely. Now, we are doing it just because you are in our school (Male, school X).

I also found this to be case during my MRes fieldwork. The day I arrived in the schools, I found a changed classroom setting in the next day. Some other problems were also explored during interviews with students:

We generally don't follow the textbook. We follow the guide so that we can pass the exam easily. We want to learn English for our real life purpose; we want to change our poor condition (Female, school Y).

I am afraid of my teacher; he criticizes me if I ask to know something. So we don't ask him (Group interview, Female, school Y).

Data suggests that students generally use a guide as it helps them to pass in the exam easily. A guide is made following the textbook and in it answers to the questions are given. It is evident that students are enthusiastic to learn English to changing their life. It is further obvious that they are afraid of their English teachers in the class which is a constraint for students' communication in the class.

Apart from findings in my MRes study, I thought there might be other barriers and difficulties which restrict CLT implementation in Bangladesh. Given the focus on my MRes study I wondered why teachers' behaviour and practice was different in the presence of a researcher? Why didn't they practice CLT regularly? Why were learners not comfortable in the classroom? Why didn't they follow the textbooks in class? What made it difficult for them to attend the English classes? The present study has explored such difficulties, barriers, and challenges of CLT implementation in Bangladesh.

As far as research design is concerned, the context of this study and the type of participants remain the same as with my MRes study but the focus has changed slightly. For my PhD, the main focus is on teachers' and learners' perceived difficulties in fostering CLT, while in my MRes it was to assess critically how far English language teaching is in line with principles and practices of communicative language teaching in Bangla-medium secondary school education in Bangladesh. I collected data using classroom observation, interviews, group interviews, government documents and photographs as I did for my MRes study, but this time I added one more data collection method: the questionnaire survey. I conducted a survey among secondary teachers in the schools (see Section 4.8.1) to choose two potential participant schools. I also revised and improved the observation instrument.

In this section I have explained how this research project links to my MRes study. In the next section, I will discuss how the scope of this study was influenced by my working experience with the OU's EIA research team.

### **1.5.2 Working with OU EIA research team**

In 2010, I worked twice (October – November and February - March) as a research consultant with the OU's research team in a project in Bangladesh called EIA. English in Action (EIA) is being implemented to improve English language teaching and learning in Bangladesh (see Section 2.2.3.3.5 -V). As result, I had opportunities to talk informally with secondary teachers who came to participate in workshops organized by EIA during February-March 2010. I talked to them in their free time on various issues, such as family life, the teaching profession and their personal interest. While talking with teachers I explored some issues that are related to teaching English, for example their opinions as English teachers, their teaching techniques and methods, problems of teaching, teaching aids and school environment. My discussion with teachers was fruitful in the sense that it really informed my research work.

I also shared my MRes fieldwork experiences with teachers. All teachers whom I talked to favoured CLT for their classroom practice but they talked about similar problems in the implementation of CLT. In particular, during my MRes fieldwork I found an inconsistency between knowledge of CLT and classroom practices. When I raised the question, why do teachers try CLT in the presence of a researcher in the school, why don't they practise it regularly? One teacher said, 'We are lazy, I have family problems, and I don't have enough time for taking preparation' (Barisal, 4th March, 2010). Another teacher said, 'If you give me good things, I will give you good things,' (Barisal, 4th March, 2010). I was surprised when a teacher said, 'My wife always keeps me under pressure, and I have a big family'. During these conversations, I was surprised by teachers' honest replies about how their personal situations affected their professional practices. This encouraged and motivated me to do the present research study, which is intended to explore the difficulties and challenges in fostering CLT.

In the above sections I have explained the two major research work experiences that are linked to my present study. Apart from my inside knowledge and understanding of research work and activities, these two opportunities were very influential regarding the present research. In the next section I will discuss another aspect of this study: my role as a researcher.

### **1.5.3 Role as a researcher**

To collect my data, I used the non-participant observation method. I also conducted a questionnaire survey. I took field notes, and talked informally with teachers and some students. I also interviewed teachers and students. As I undertook the data collection and analysis, two legitimate considerations need to be addressed here.

When conducting my research, I was confident that having grown up and had experience of teaching in tertiary level in Bangladesh, it would be relatively easy to collect and

examine my data. Moreover, as a tertiary level teacher who completed secondary school 19 years ago, I thought it would be easy for me to maintain an analytic distance to my data. However, I also recognised that it would take much conscious effort to separate my pre-conceived ideas from what I was observing. On the other hand, my insider status and my cultural membership allowed me to see things that might otherwise have gone unnoticed. Indeed, Emerson (1983, p.184) states, fieldwork is a 'deeply personal as well as a scientific project', where subjectivity and emotional experiences are bound up with the interpretative process.

It has been argued that reflexivity is an important feature of ethnographical research, which allows the researcher's active involvement in research work. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) suggest that the researcher cannot help but bring their own biographies and subjectivities to their field of enquiry. According to Eisner (1993) in social science research a value-free interpretation is impossible. So, instead of denying that my subjectivity can contaminate the data, my approach is to lay it out in the open and make it part of the analytic process. Being reflective allows researchers to reflect on their own interactions, feelings, and make this clear in their reports. Moreover, in view of the general criticisms of ethnographical work, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) argued that reflexivity allows the researcher to connect the process of data collection and data analysis to help ensure rigour in the research. Hence, I will make sense of the research process by recounting the processes, problems, choices, and errors that emerged during the fieldwork. In the above sections, I have discussed the scope of this study. In the following section, I will present an overview of my thesis chapters.

## **1.6 Overview of chapters**

This thesis is comprised of three parts: I, II and III. Part I consists of Chapters 1 to 4 and sets the background for the empirical study. In Chapter 1, I discuss the contextual grounds and personal and professional motivation to design and pursue this research study. In

addition, I also present aims and research questions in this chapter. Further I explain the scope of this study. In Chapter 2, I present the context of the study, which includes a brief description of Bangladesh, the language situation there and the landscape of English Language Teaching. In Chapter 3, I review the literature related to this study. Given the aim of this study, I present an overview of the defining features of communicative language teaching (CLT) in this chapter that includes a study of the emergence of CLT, its underlying theoretical assumptions, and the difficulties and challenges of implementing CLT in ELF contexts, including development contexts such as Bangladesh. In chapter 4, I discuss the research design and methodology of this study. This includes justification of the ethnographical qualitative approach chosen, arguments about validity, reliability and generalization related to this study, the process of gaining access and ethical considerations, and methods of data collection and analysis. This chapter also presents the details of the research setting including the schools where data were collected and the teachers and students observed and interviewed.

Part II, Chapters 5 to 7, deals with data analysis. Chapter 5 presents the analysis of classroom observation data. In this chapter, I explain individual teacher profiles and briefly describe the lessons that I observed. I then analyse beginning activities, middle activities and ending activities that I observed in the lessons. I also analyse teacher and student activities to demonstrate the proportion of activities, teacher vs. students' talk time and their use of L1 and L2 in the lessons.

In Chapter 6, I analyse one of the major themes: pedagogical difficulties that teachers come across implementing CLT. I explain these difficulties under the following sub-themes: Lack of pre-service training; inadequate in-service training; Lack of opportunities for input into policy making; Lack of English skills: teachers and students; Inconsistent examination system; Lack of grammar teaching in context; Influence of previous methods; Impact of teachers' private tuition; Separation of female and male students and Lack of

general educational techniques. General educational techniques are explained under the following sub-categories: Classroom management skills; Lack of lesson plans, Teachers' Guide or Book Map; No awareness of beginning, middle and ending activities in the lessons; Lack of integrated skills practice; Lack of interactive activities and Use of guidebook.

In Chapter 7, I analyse the second major theme: environmental and personal difficulties that teachers and students face implementing CLT. First, I interpret the environmental difficulties under the following sub-categories: Too few classes, Short lessons, Lack of a free and fair professional environment for teachers, Large classes, Lack of coordination in teaching methods, Lack of English-speaking environment, Insufficient funds and teaching aids, Lack of support from colleagues, and Lack of secure and non-threatening classroom for students. After explaining the environmental difficulties, I analyse the personal difficulties under the following sub-themes: Lack of financial gain, Lack of prestige, Lack of fair selection and Students' poor background.

Part III, Chapter 8, is the conclusion. Here I bring together evidence from my analysis in Chapter 5-7. I consider what my research has shown, and I suggest recommendations that could help implementing CLT in Bangladesh. I also consider some limitations of the study and possibilities for further research.

## **1.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have introduced the context of this study, the nature of my research approach, the area of research, my methods of data collection and participants. This chapter also presents the grounds of the study, which includes a contextual justification and my personal and professional motivations to undertake this research. Following the rationale and significance, this chapter presents the aims of this study. This chapter also

presents the research questions that were set to attain the objectives of this study. In addition, I have discussed the scope of this study. Finally I discussed what I did chapter wise in this study. In the next chapter, I will explain the context of the study.



## Chapter 2: Context of the study

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a brief picture of Bangladesh that includes its population, history, human development, GDP, literacy rate and per-capita income. Languages spoken in Bangladesh are also discussed in this chapter. This chapter also describes the use of English under the following headings: English use in Government, English use in the private sector, Media, publication and entertainment, English use in the Education sector. In addition, this chapter details the education structure and ELT at secondary stage. Finally this chapter briefly describes the English language education policy at secondary level which includes access to English, resources in English, methods and materials, the examination system, teacher qualification processes and English teacher training projects.

### 2.2 Bangladesh

Bangladesh, a South Asian nation, is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, with a population of over 158 million in an area of 144,000 sq. kms. Once it was part of ancient India and ruled successively by Hindu rulers, and then by Muslim conquerors from Persia and Central Asia, until it became a British colony in the late 1750s. In 1947 British rule came to an end and India and Pakistan became two independent states based on religion



Figure 2.1: Map of Bangladesh

(Hinduism and Islam respectively). Bangladesh was then known as East Pakistan. Because the population was primarily Muslim in Bangladesh (East Pakistan) was unified with Pakistan. The two wings of Pakistan, the West and the East, were separated not only by languages and cultures, but also by 1600 kilometres of

Indian Territory. And finally after the liberation war, present-day Bangladesh seceded from West Pakistan and became an independent sovereign state on 16 December 1971 (see Thompson, 2007 for more details).

Bangladesh is considered as a 'low-income' country whose annual per capita income is US\$ 411 (BANBEIS, 2004). The literacy rate is 45.3% in Bangladesh, so over half of its population aged seven years and over are illiterate (BANBEIS, 2004). As far as the quality of life is concerned, according to the Human Development Index Measurement, Bangladesh is 137<sup>th</sup> among 177 nations (UNDP, 2006). Nearly half of its total population live below the poverty line (World Bank, 2002a). Considering these indicators, a typical picture that is drawn about this country is that 'extreme poverty, high birth rate and mortality rates, disease and natural disasters, and a generally poor quality of life characterize Bangladesh' (*Bangladesh Country Review*, 2006, p. 79). This representation repeats an earlier description by the World Bank: 'Bangladesh is a country of paradoxes. It is a homogeneous nation with a rich culture, yet it remains one of the poorest nations in the world' (World Bank, 2002b, p. i). Bangladesh is a nation of paradoxes indeed. However, it may not be a paradox that despite its rich culture and cultural homogeneity, Bangladesh remains poor. After all, cultural richness and homogeneity is not a must for a nation's economic development. The paradox actually lies in the fact that the country is developed and underdeveloped, rural and urban; its people are both literate and illiterate. While some Bangladeshis lead a luxurious life, many others live in scarcity and hunger. In other words, it is, like many other developing nations, a divided society, and the gap between the haves and have-nots lies, among other factors, in the traditional realms of education and English as well as geographic location (see Hasan, 2003).

## 2.2.1 Language in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is described as a homogeneous nation considering that a large number of its total population speaks Bangla, the national language. In Bangladesh, 98% of the population speak in Bangla (BANBEIS, 2004). This homogeneity is also seen in the religious formation of the population. In Bangladesh, Muslims constitute 89.7% of the total population; Hindus, Buddhists and Christians are 9.2%, 0.7% and 0.3%



Figure 2.2: Map of Bangladesh Languages

respectively (BANBEIS, 2004). Bangladesh is often called a monolingual nation because of the dominance of Bangla (Banu, 2002; Choudhury, 2001a). However, 1.2 million (1.13%) are non-Bangla speakers (e.g. Chakmas, Marmas, Tripperas, Tanchangya, Mros, Santals, Khasis, Graos and Khajons) and they belong to several dozen ethnic groups (Mohsin, 2003, p. 83).

The number of languages spoken by these communities varies. Sikder (2007) mentions 26 ethnic languages, while Wasif (2006) states that 50 of these languages are endangered. In addition, there are 300,000 Urdu-speaking Pakistanis in Bangladesh who have been living in Bangladesh permanently since the war in 1971 (Wasif, 2006). Furthermore, there are a number of dialects in Bangla (Maniruzzaman, 2006). People use these regional dialects in order to communicate in the local areas. But Standard Bangla is the language of literacy as well as the medium of instruction at different levels of education.

Bangla, the national language, is a sensitive issue in Bangladesh (Baldauf et al., 2008). Bangladeshi nationalism is deeply rooted within this issue which led the nation to its independence from Pakistan in 1971 (Hossain & Tollefson, 2007; Mohsin, 2003; Musa, 1996; Thompson, 2007). The 21st of February is observed as the International Mother Language Day or National Martyrs' Day as some Bangladeshi people sacrificed their lives for their mother tongue. On this day in 1952, five Bangladeshis were killed by Pakistani



police while they were protesting against the imposition of Urdu as the state language of Pakistan. As Thompson explains:

What had begun as a Language Movement in the late 1940s and early 1950s, propelled by the Pakistani leadership's unwillingness to recognise Bangla as a national language, therefore led on to a widespread Bengali nationalism, which finally achieved full independence for East Bengal/Pakistan, showing very clearly how instrumental language and identity issues can be in the initiation of struggles towards political self-determination. (2007, p. 47)

However, language policies in Bangladesh do not recognise minority languages, let alone take steps to protect them (Mohsin, 2003; Wasif, 2006). In this particular respect, Bangladesh's language policy can be compared to Japan's language policy in which the existences of minority languages are ignored to promote Japanese (Hashimoto, 2007). For Bangladesh, it is ironic that the nation which sacrificed lives for its national language would deny the same rights to certain sections of its own population (Mohsin, 2003).

## **2.2.2 English use in Bangladesh**

In this section, I will discuss the use of English under the following headings: Language use in Government, Language use in the private sector, Media, publication and entertainment and Language use in the Education sector

### **2.2.2.1 Language use in Government**

Although Bangla was introduced as an official language in Bangladesh, English persists in this important domain. Banu and Sussex (2001a) claim that "historical pressure from the colonial past and demands of a future, where English is recognised as a global language, guarantee the continuation of English within the government in varying ways" (p. 129). Moreover, since the 1990s the importance of English has increased in Bangladesh for many reasons, such as globalisation, satellite television, the growth of the IT industry and the Bangladeshi garment industry (see Imam, 2005; Zaman, 2003). There are many other

reasons for the growth of English in the government. Firstly, Bangladesh depends on aid for its developmental activities; as a result, the Government of Bangladesh has to work with officials of different donor organisations and multinational bodies (Banu & Sussex, 2001a). Secondly, the importance of global communication dramatically increased for various reasons, and the government needs to communicate with the outside world for export, import, foreign investment and a multitude of other purposes. Both have advanced the necessity of English in the government. Thirdly, since 2002 Bangladesh has gradually introduced eGovernment “to improve the efficiency, responsiveness, transparency, and accountability of government” (Sobhan et. al, 2004, n. p.). eGovernment aims to provide services to people through the Internet, which will significantly reduce the flow of people to government offices for these services. This has led to a greater necessity for English as the websites and their contents are written mostly in English so that they are accessible to overseas as well as local clients.

The necessity of English in government, as in many other sectors, can hardly be overemphasised. For instance, Shahidullah (2002b) quotes a Ministry of Establishment order, which reads:

It is noted that due to weaknesses in English many candidates selected for foreign training/higher studies are not acceptable to funding countries or agencies. Such a situation is embarrassing both for the selected candidates and for the government. In order to avoid such situations practice of English side by side with Bengali should be encouraged at all levels of the government. (Shahidullah, 2002b, n. p.)

Shahidullah also observes “more than average proficiency in English is still a necessity in the administrative services in Bangladesh” (2002b, n.p.). In Bangladesh, English is a requirement for all government recruitment whether it is for an office assistant or a class one civil servant. “There is a general perception that almost all jobs regard English as an asset and give preference to candidates with good command of spoken and written English” (Khan, 2002, p. 327).

#### **2.2.2.2. Language use in the private sector**

The use of English in government organizations is limited but growing. However, the private sectors as well as the large network of donor-funded Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) are using English extensively for their various purposes. It is also true that, in some private enterprises and private universities, the medium of communication is English. Such institutions do not have concerns about the government's measures and the political and social consequences of promoting English (Baldauf, et al., 2008; Hamid, 2006a). Multinational corporations, international schools, colleges and universities, hotel chains, financial companies, computer technology giants, telecommunication companies, donor agencies, private banks mainly function in English, where Bangla has only a minor role. Khan (2002) claims, "correspondence for both regional/international trades is conducted mainly through English. Business discussions, meetings and correspondence are also conducted via English. Joint venture projects between local and foreign companies also necessitate the use of English, more and more now recognised as a global language" (p. 327). Shahidullah focuses the necessity of English in this broader domain. He claims, "All employers, especially the lucrative private and multinational sectors, now value communication skills in English, and prefer graduates who can communicate well in English" (2002a, n. p.).

#### **2.2.2.3 Media, publication and entertainment**

The use of English is also prevalent in print and electronic media. According to Rahman and Ahmed (2003) during 1997-98, a total of 286 daily newspapers and 1,522 periodicals were published in which about 10% were in English and circulation of daily newspapers and periodicals in both languages was 2,237,960 and 987,810 respectively. Despite the publication of a good number of dailies and periodicals in Bangladesh, the readership is small. Only about 15% of the population read a newspaper/periodical once a week (Rahman & Ahmed, 2003). It is not known how many English newspapers and magazines are currently published in Bangladesh. There were 11 daily newspapers in English in 1998 (Banu & Sussex, 2001a, p. 136). The readers of English newspapers mainly live in the urban area. In addition to

local English newspapers and magazines, international magazines including *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Economist*, *National Geographic*, *Reader's Digest* and others are available for urban readers (Khan, 2002, p. 326). The use of English in the local electronic media is minimal. According to Banu and Sussex (2001a) in the late 1990s BTV (Bangladesh Television), the only government TV channel, telecast slightly over 10% of its total programs in English. In the mid 1990s, private local television channels started telecasting (Khan, 2007). The use of English on these TV channels is equally minimal. Nevertheless, this minimal presence of English is compensated by international channels, such as BBC, CNN, HBO, Star Movies, Star Plus, MTV, ESPN, National Geographic, Animal Planet and Cartoon Network and dozens of others which are available to Bangladeshi viewers (Khan, 2002). Most of these channels broadcast in English, some Hindi and some English-Hindi mixed programs. 'Despite the nationalistic feeling and love for Bangla, younger Bangladeshis have a great love for English music, movies and audio and video entertainment' (Khan, 2002, p. 326). However, both local private and satellite channels are available only in urban areas, not in rural areas. Hollywood movies and international music are also found in CD/DVD stores in urban areas. However, Hindi music and Bollywood movies (Indian Hindi movies) are more popular than English movies. In fact, during Hindu and Muslim weddings all over Bangladesh, it is more common to hear Hindi music than Bangla or English music.

The publication industry is a growing industry in Bangladesh in which Bangla is dominant. Publication of creative work in English is rather limited, but journals in English are common. All universities and art and cultural organisations such as Bangladesh Shilpokola Academy, Bangla Academy and Asiatic Society of Bangladesh publish them on a regular basis. Zaman claims that

While the Bangla Academy has been mainly engaged in publishing books in Bangla and translating from English to Bangla, it publishes the *Bangla Academy*

*Journal* in English, and over the years, has published a considerable amount of Bangla literature translated into English (Zaman, 2003, p. 491).

In Bangladesh different research organisations and NGOs also contribute to the amount of publications in English. Khan claims that ‘the availability of English language books in bookstores and the publication of various books in English is a testimony of growing interest and awareness of English’ (2002, p. 326).

#### **2.2.2.4 Language use in the Education sector**

English plays a very important role in education. According to a 1974 first Education Commission Report, Bangla became the medium of instruction for all levels of education (Ministry of Education, 1974). Nevertheless, Bangla could not replace English completely at the tertiary education level because of the lack of textbooks in Bangla, and it was also not possible to translate all the required books from other languages. Rahman describes the present university practice in the following way:

The medium of instruction at the university level now is in some faculties Bengali, in some faculties English (especially in science subjects) and in some faculties a mixture of the two. Students can write their exam papers either in English or Bengali. (1999, p. 16)

In fact, textbooks and reading material are predominantly in English. Choudhury claims “Bengali has failed to be an adequate medium for higher education, particularly because almost 95 percent of the necessary text and reference books happen to be in English” (2001a, p. 80). There are 74 universities in Bangladesh, 21 of which are state-funded and 53 are privately-owned (BANBEIS, 2006). Generally, the government universities follow a mixed-medium of education, whereas an exclusive English-medium instruction is followed in private universities, which have started operating since the introduction of the Private University Act, 1992 (Banu & Sussex, 2001a). Furthermore, in order to teach all subjects in English, private universities offer between one and three compulsory English courses at the



undergraduate level (Hamid, 2006a; Rahman, 2005). However, English is also taught as skills courses to students in medical, engineering, business, sciences, social sciences and arts courses in state universities and tertiary colleges (Khan, 2002).

### 2.2.3 Education structure and ELT landscape

In this section I will present a picture of the education structure in Bangladesh. Before describing secondary education composition and its English language education, I will briefly explain the Bangladesh education structure in the following section.

#### 2.2.3.1 Education structure

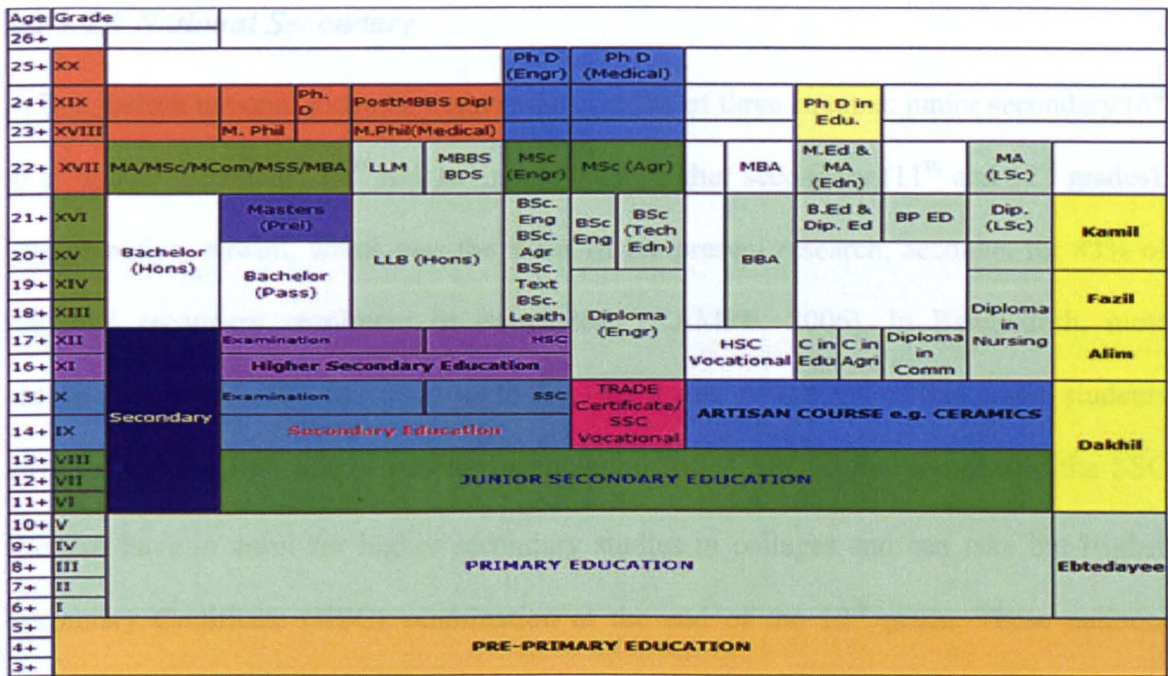


Figure 2.3: National education structure of Bangladesh ([www.banbeis.gov.bd/es\\_bd.htm](http://www.banbeis.gov.bd/es_bd.htm))

The Bangladeshi education system encompasses a number of stages i.e. primary, junior secondary, secondary, higher secondary, tertiary and higher education. Primary education is a five-year compulsory programme from grade one to five. It is followed by secondary education, which is divided into three stages: junior secondary (6th to 8th grade), secondary (9th and 10th grades) and higher secondary (11th and 12<sup>th</sup> grades). Higher secondary education is followed by tertiary education, which has two divisions: bachelor and master degree. It is a 5-year programme. The bachelor degree is comprised of a 4-year programme, whereas the master’s degree is 1-year. Tertiary education offers degrees in

science, science and technology, engineering, medical science, agriculture, social science, arts, and business studies etc. Tertiary level is followed by higher education. Figure 2.3 gives a clear picture of the education structure in Bangladesh. In the next section, I will detail the secondary education formation, which was my area of research

### **2.2.3.2 Secondary education**

In Bangladesh there are three streams of secondary education: the national secondary (secular), the religious stream (Madrasa education), and English-medium education (EME). I will explain these three streams in the following sections.

#### ***2.2.3.2.1 National Secondary***

In Bangladesh national secondary education consists of three streams: junior secondary (6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade), secondary (9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades) and higher secondary (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades). The secondary stream, which was the focus of the present research, accounts for 83% of the total secondary enrolment in Bangladesh (CAMPE, 2006). In Bangladesh, most secondary schools offer education up to the 10th grade. At the end of this grade, students have to take the first school-leaving examination called SSC. After completing the SSC students have to enrol for higher secondary studies in colleges and can take the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. These national examinations, SSC, and HSC are conducted by eight education boards (BISE) located in metropolitan areas across the country. The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) control the education administration, which is under the administration of the Ministry of Education (BANBEIS 2006). In the secondary level students are offered two English subjects: English for Today (EFT) and English Grammar and Composition, termed as first part and second part respectively. This constitutes approximately 19% of the total curricular load (CAMPE, 2006).

In Bangladesh, only 7.6% of its labour force has secondary and higher secondary qualifications which obviously indicates the significance of its secondary education (World

Bank, 2000). In addition, a BANBEIS (2004) studies reports that at the 10<sup>th</sup> grade 55% students drop out which is very high in Bangladesh and many students fail in SSC exams and cannot go for higher secondary studies. Yet, many students desire to complete the secondary programme because, primarily it gives them the national recognition, as it is the first national examination and secondly for job qualification particularly for female candidates. According to national recruitment policies, a primary school teaching qualification for female candidates is SSC, whereas male candidates must have a bachelor degree. Moreover, 60% of the total teaching positions are reserved for females. This favouritism encourages women's education and employment in the country.

#### ***2.2.3.2.2 Madrasa Education***

The Madrasa secondary education is parallel to secular secondary education. This system teaches Bangla, English, sciences, humanities and other secular courses along with the Koran and other Islamic subjects (see Asadullah & Chaudhury, 2008; Hossain & Tollefson, 2007 for more details about this system). The religion-based institutions have 16% of the total secondary enrolment in the country (CAMPE, 2006).

#### ***2.2.3.2.3 English Medium Education***

EME, the third section of secondary education, is provided by English-medium schools. The government of Bangladesh allows EME to operate, though is not part of the national education system (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 15). These schools are mainly for the elite and the curriculum is designed on the basis of the British education system (Rahman, 2007; Zaman, 2004). EME follows the British curriculum for GCSE and 'A' level examinations and the British Council office in Dhaka conducts these examinations. The system is 'totally different and isolated from the nationally accepted curriculum' (Chakraborti, 2002, p. 238). Bangla is taught as a second language in this education system (Hamid, 2006b). At the time of Independence, there were only a few EME schools, most of which were in Dhaka. However, their number started increasing in the late 70s and early

80s. The exact number of these schools currently in operation is not known because of the minimal control the government has over these institutions (Chakraborti, 2002, p. 238). According to Banu (2005) the total number of these institutions was 2000 across the country. The increase of EME schools in the urban and suburban areas across the country raises social divisions in terms of socio-economic status, language use and life-style. Taking into account these divisions, Choudhury (2001b) argues, 'the state must address itself to the question whether it wants to have a more egalitarian society or to widen the social gulf further, with the knowledge of English acting as a divisive factor' (p. 16). In the past, in response to this, since 1990 the Bangladeshi government has given greater emphasis on English education at national level to ensure equal opportunities for everyone (see Hamid & Baldauf, 2008). The EME constitutes just 1% of the total secondary enrolment in the country (CAMPE, 2006).

#### ***2.2.3.2.4 Access to technology in schools***

One of the main concerns of the Bangladesh government is the education sector. In 2010-11, the government allocated 7.43% of the national budget to education (Ministry of Finance, 2011), which is still insufficient for delivering quality teaching (see section 1.2.1 in Chapter 2). However, despite this limitation, the Bangladesh government is currently giving priority to technology and English education in an attempt to bring the country 'up to speed' with the modern developed world and thus accelerate the progress and development of the nation. The Bangladesh government is committed to making Bangladesh a modern nation keeping in view the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and initiatives have been taken to build up 'Digital Bangladesh'. In the year 2010, the Bangladesh government adopted a comprehensive education policy 'National Education Policy-2010', introducing a modern and work-oriented education system. The government has taken initiatives to distribute computers and laptops in schools with a view to developing students' technical skills. The Government has also allocated a position of a

computer teacher at secondary school level. Giving top priority to education, despite its poor economy, the Bangladesh government ensures electricity in most secondary schools.

### **2.2.3.3 English language education**

This section discusses the English language education policy in the national secondary system under the following headings: Approach for English education, Methods and materials, Examination system, Teacher qualifications and English teacher training projects.

#### ***2.2.3.3.1 Approach for English education***

Considering the importance of English competence at the national level, the Bangladesh government implementing an 'EEE' policy or 'English for Everyone' (Wedell, 2008) for teaching English (Hamid, 2010). English is offered as a mandatory subject for students at all levels in the national curriculum from primary to tertiary, undergraduate level in colleges and universities (Hamid, 2000; Rahman, 2005) with a view to developing communicative competence 'for higher education, foreign trade and business, global communication, foreign employment, and for utilisation of modern technology in sectors such as education, agriculture, administration and business' (Hassan, 2011). In addition, English is a mandatory subject for *madrasa* students, religious stream education, and it is compulsory for all students regardless of their geographic location and social background (Hamid, 2010).

In Bangladesh, English language competence is considered as human capital (Hamid and Baldauf, 2008) and assumed to be a factor of personal and national development (Erling, et al., 2012). Bangladesh education policy attempts to ensure equal opportunities for everyone for access to English learning; but 49.2% of the population is classed as illiterate (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2010) and therefore have limited access to English learning. In addition, students from particular socio-economic backgrounds are successful in English learning in Bangladesh, while others are not (Hamid, 2009; Hassan, 2003).

However, the Bangladeshi government is aspiring to achieve 100 percent literacy and aims to eradicate illiteracy by 2014 (Ministry of Finance, 2011), which they believe will help to eliminate the mismatch between policy and practice.

#### ***2.2.3.3.2 Methods and materials***

In terms of teaching the four language skills- listening, speaking, reading and writing, the Bangladeshi government implemented CLT as an official methodology for secondary English teaching in the late 1990s (NCTB, 2001; Hamid, 2005; Hamid & Baldauf, 2008). The methodology is defined in the Preface of the new CLT textbooks introduced at that time, written by the Chairman of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board:

The book follows the communicative approach to teaching and learning English in Bangladesh situations. It provides learners with a variety of materials such as reading texts, dialogues, pictures, diagrams, tasks and activities. These materials have been designed and developed for practice in four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing (NCTB, 2001, n. p.)

However, research findings reported that teachers still follow pre-CLT methods in classroom instruction (Anwar, 2005; Hamid & Baldauf, 2008). The introduction of a new approach brought a little change in ELT classrooms (see section 1.2.1).

As far as materials are concerned, the Bangladeshi government has a preference for locally produced textbooks for all subjects including English. Materials for teaching English were written by local experts with the help of external expertise (Hunter 2009; Farooqui, 2008). The National Textbook Board of Bangladesh (NCTB) designs and distributes the national curriculum, syllabus and textbooks for secondary education. The English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP), jointly funded by the Government of Bangladesh and the UK's Department for International Development (DfID) took the responsibility for CLT implementation, designing the curriculum, producing materials and textbooks, and implementing teacher training in CLT throughout the country (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008).

### ***2.2.3.3.3 Examination system***

In an academic year, students have to sit for three school-administered examinations, the first term, mid-term and final examination. In addition, at the end of the 10th grade, students have to sit the first school-leaving examination, which is called the SSC (Secondary School Certificate). These examinations mainly focus on testing the skills of reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar. But two essential skills, listening and speaking, are not examined, which is an inconsistency between the examination system and CLT pedagogy (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008). Moreover, the teaching pedagogy is exam-driven and teacher-centred (Sarwar, 2008; Hassan, 2011).

### ***2.2.3.3.4 Teacher qualifications***

In Bangladesh, for secondary school teaching, the minimum qualification requirement is a bachelor degree. Teachers also need to complete a 1-year in-service BEd training. The NAEM (National Academy for Education Management) along with government and non-government teacher training colleges located in metropolitan areas and district towns provide this teacher education and training. There are 14 public and 68 private teacher-training colleges (TTCs) affiliated with the National University of Bangladesh (BANBEIS 2006), which are inadequate for teacher education and training (Hamid, 2010). In addition, there is a distance mode BEd programme in Bangladesh Open University. But in the National University's BEd programme 5% is English out of its total curriculum. Moreover, English teachers have to take an additional English class. This class only prepares teachers a little for English teaching, as most of them lack the relevant educational background; i.e. English or L2 pedagogy.

### ***2.2.3.3.5 English teacher training projects***

In Bangladesh, institutional capability is very limited for training teachers, in particular English teachers (Hamid, 2010). As a result, over the last couple of years, the following



English teacher training projects have been implemented with view to enhancing English teachers' pedagogic and English skills and to improve the teaching and learning of English in Bangladeshi schools. A very brief description of these projects is given in the following section.

### **(I). English Language Teaching Improvement Project (1997-2012)**

This project was jointly implemented by the British Council and NCTB, Bangladesh. It aimed to train school English teachers in CLT in a 13-day programme and produce an English textbook for grades 9-10 following the CLT ideology (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008; Hunter, 2009; Rahman, 2007). ELTIP trained only 11,737 teachers in its first phase by October 2004 (DSHE, 2004). Due to financial problems ELTIP then stopped its operation (ELTIP, 2009; Hamid, 2010). According to a 2005 *Education Watch* report, more than half of the secondary teachers did not receive any professional pedagogic training (CAMPE, 2006), which apparently creating problems for CLT implementation. The first phase of the project succeeded in setting four regional and 12 satellite resource centres for training purposes. ELTIP therefore only met limited success in making the English curriculum more reachable to students and teachers, and familiarising teachers with the principles of communicative teaching (Rahman, 2007).

### **(II). Teaching Quality Improvement in the Secondary Education Project (2005-2011)**

The Ministry of Education (MoE) implemented the TQI-SEP project. The Asian Development Bank (ADB), Canadian International Development Agency, and the government of Bangladesh jointly funded this project.

The focus of this project was to improve the quality of secondary education. According to its official website:

The TQI project's goal is to enhance the quality of education in Bangladesh secondary schools. Our purpose is to provide quality initial and in-service teacher training, including professional development opportunities that will improve classroom practice (see <http://www.tqi-sep.gov.bd/>).



This project gave priority to providing training and other professional development opportunities for English teachers. The project provided a 21-day CLT training to English teachers that mainly focussed on teaching four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. This project aimed to train 28,000 English teachers but not even one fifth of the teachers had received training by 2010 (*Daily Ittefaq*, 2010).

### **(III). Secondary Education Quality and Access Enhancement Project (July 2008-June 2014)**

Like TQI-SEP, The Ministry of Education implemented the SEQAEP project in July 2008. This is a general education project funded by the World Bank and aims to improve the quality of education and students' access to Bangladesh secondary schools. This project is working to pursue several objectives. One of the major focuses of this project is to provide training to English and Mathematics teachers, from low-performing schools in the rural areas. Unlike TQI-SEP, the SEQAEP training mainly focused on how to increase pass rates in English and prevent drop out and overcome students' fear of English.

### **(IV). English for Teaching, Teaching for English (January 2008-December 2010)**

In January 2008, the ETTE project, funded by the British Council, began working with a view to training primary school teachers. This project developed training materials considering Bangladesh's classroom practice and teachers' needs. The training had two focuses: to develop teachers' English skills and to familiarise them with pedagogic skills. This was a small-scale project which trained only 2000 primary teachers.

### **(V). English in Action (2008-2017)**

English in Action is a large-scale English language teaching project in Bangladesh. In May 2008, this project, funded by DfID, started operation with an emphasis on improving communicative ability, Bangladesh's participation in the global economy, and its economic development. As the project declares:

English in Action will provide communicative English to transform the lives of people in Bangladesh and make a major contribution to the economic

development of the country [...]. It will look to change the lives of up to 25 million people using new approaches to teaching and learning (see [http: www.eiabd.com/](http://www.eiabd.com/))

EIA is introducing the use of technology and training to improve teaching and learning of English at primary and secondary level. It also aims to provide English learning opportunities to masses of people through the Internet and radio broadcast. As a result BBC WEST has been a vital partner of this project. The other partners are The Open University, UK, BMB Mott MacDonald (the Netherlands) and the Children's Educational Programme and Friends in Village Development (Bangladesh).

## **2.3 Conclusion**

In the above discussion, I presented some information i.e. population, history, human development, GDP, literacy rate and per-capita income regarding Bangladesh. I also detailed the languages spoken in Bangladesh. I discussed the use of English in Government, in the private sector, Media, publication and entertainment and in the Education sector. In addition, I explained the education structure and ELT landscape, in particular the secondary stage. Finally, I briefly described the English language education policy in secondary level regarding Approach for English education, Methods and materials, the Examination system, Teacher qualifications and English teacher training projects. In the chapter that follows I will present a literature review of CLT.

## **Chapter 3 Literature review**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents an overview of the defining features of communicative language teaching (CLT). These features were used to observe and analyse the ongoing ELT practices in the context of Bangladesh. This overview includes a study of the emergence of CLT, its underlying theoretical assumptions, and the difficulties and challenges of implementing CLT in EFL contexts, including development contexts such as Bangladesh.

### **3.2 Background**

Before looking into the challenges of implementing CLT in Bangladesh, I will provide an overview of the development of this approach and its theoretical foundations. CLT originated from changes in the British Situational Language Teaching approach dating from the late 1960s (Carter & Nunan, 2001; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Prior to this, foreign language teaching in Europe involved the implementation of different approaches, including grammar-translation and the audio-lingual approach, which was based on a structuralist approach to language. There were various reasons for a shift to a communicative approach, including changing educational realities. New political agendas meant that it was important for European adults to learn other major European languages in order to communicate in the European Common Market and the Council of Europe, a regional organization for cultural and educational cooperation (Richards & Rodgers, 1986:64-65). In this context, the British linguist, David Wilkins, proposed a basis for developing communicative syllabuses for language teaching in 1972 (Richards and Rodgers 1986:65). He is often credited as the pioneer of the CLT approach.

The emergence of the CLT approach came about in part as a response to Chomsky's criticisms of structural theories of language and in part due to the theories of British functional linguists such as Firth and Halliday, as well as those of American sociolinguists,

such as Hymes, Gumperz, and Labov and the writings of Austin and Searle on speech acts (see Richards and Rodgers 1986:64). Giving emphasis on meaning, communication and learners' communicative competence, CLT gradually replaced the previous grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods

CLT was adopted and implemented rapidly, as it gained reputation quickly in British language teaching circles by receiving the approval and assistance of leading British applied linguists, language teaching specialists, textbook writers, publishers, curriculum development centres, as well as institutions, such as the British Council. Though the movement started as a largely British innovation to implement an alternative conception of a syllabus, both American and British proponents recognized CLT as an approach that focuses mainly on communicative competence and learning four language skills integratedly for meaningful communication (Richards & Rodgers, 1986:65-66).

As well as in Europe, CLT has more recently been adopted in Asian contexts, in particular in East Asia. This is due to changing educational policies, which promote the development of English skills, so that people can communicate effectively in English (Littlewood, 2007; Ho, 2004). However, in recent years CLT also has received varied blessings (Burnby & Sun, 1989; Li, 1998, Ellis, 1996; Thomson, 1996).

### **3.3 Theoretical underpinnings of CLT**

Since its origin, CLT has been defined by various proponents in many different contexts from different perspectives (see e.g., Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Canale and Swain, 1980; Breen & Candlin 1980; Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Larsen-Freeman 1986; Savignon, 1983, 1997; Brown, 2001; Littlewood 1981; Nunan 1989; Berns, 1990). "There is no single text or authority on it, nor any single model that is universally accepted as authoritative" (Richards & Rodgers, 1986:66).

Brown (2001) argues that CLT is a theoretical position about the nature of language and of language teaching, rather than a specific method of teaching. So while there may be no

single definition of the term, there are two central theoretical underpinnings of a communicative approach to language teaching. The first is the promotion of 'communicative competence' through the process of communication and the second is a view of language that focuses on meaning and function. Thus an understanding of these notions is central to the definition of CLT.

### **3.3.1 Communicative Competence**

Like CLT, the term 'communicative competence' has been defined by many experts in many ways. As mentioned above, the main objective of CLT is to develop what Hymes (1972) called "communicative competence". Therefore, an analysis of the providence and development of this term provides insight into one of the main theoretical underpinnings of CLT.

Hymes introduced the idea of communicative competence in order to distinguish between communicative features of language and Chomsky's competence theory.

Chomsky maintained that

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance (Chomsky 1965: 3).

By competence, Chomsky meant the shared knowledge of the ideal speaker-listener set in a completely homogenous speech community. Such underlying knowledge enables a user of a language to produce and understand an infinite set of sentences out of a finite set of rules. Performance, on the other hand, is concerned with the process of applying the underlying knowledge to the actual language use. Hymes (1972) pointed out that Chomsky's view of competence is too idealized to describe actual language behaviour, and therefore finds his

view of performance to be an incomplete reflection on competence. Hymes (1972) furthermore suggests that Chomsky's theory does not account for socio-cultural factors or differential competence in a heterogeneous speech community.

Hymes' (1972) view of competence is an expanded view of Chomsky's as for him it involves both knowledge and the ability to use language. He argues that competence cannot be considered as only grammatical knowledge; it needs to be defined as a combination of knowledge and the ability to use this knowledge to communicate in a heterogeneous speech community. He puts forward the term 'communicative competence' to cover both knowledge and ability for language use with respect to

whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible; whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available; whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated; and whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed, and what its doing entails (1972: 281).

Hymes (1972) also suggests that a linguistics theory must be able to deal with a heterogeneous speech community, differential competence, and the role of socio-cultural features. Widdowson (1978) suggests that language learning does not necessarily mean acquiring the grammatical knowledge but acquiring the ability to use language for communication. To know a language means to know how to understand, speak, read, write, and also to know how to use these sentences appropriately to achieve communicative purposes. It is also important to acquire both communicative and linguistics competence simultaneously; otherwise the mere acquisition of linguistics skills may inhibit the development of communicative abilities (Widdowson, 1978). Widdoson's idea seems to be influenced by Hymes's (1972) thought that children acquire not only the knowledge of grammar but also the knowledge of appropriateness. So, it is essential to teach both linguistics and communicative competence. And for this, Widdoson differentiates two

aspects of performance: 'usage' and 'use', where usage refers to language users' knowledge of grammar rules, and use refers to the ability to use this grammar knowledge for effective communication (Widdoson, 1978). He also distinguishes two aspects of meaning: 'significance' and 'value'. Significance is the meaning that sentences have in isolation from the particular situation in which the sentence is produced. Value is the meaning that sentences take on when they are used to communicate. The classroom presentation must ensure the acquisition of both kinds of competence by providing linguistic and communicative contexts (Widdoson, 1978).

According to Munby, competence is "the mastery of the abstract system of rules by which a person is able to understand and produce any and all of the well-formed sentences of his language, i.e. his linguistic competence" (1978:7). Communicative competence, does not necessarily mean the only use of language, it is also related to a person's contextual knowledge, and the knowledge of how to use language in different contexts, Allen and Brown (1976) cited by Wiemann & Backlund (1980) claim that "communication competence, unlike linguistic competence, involves awareness of the transactions that occur between people. Competence in this perspective is tied to actual performance of the language in social situations" (p. 248)

Canale and Swain (1980) further developed the concept of communicative competence. According to them, communicative competence means gaining competence in three aspects: grammatical, sociological and strategic (p.27). Grammatical competence emphasises the knowledge of the language code, such as grammatical rules, vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling (Canale & Swain, 1980:6).

Many theorists describe grammatical competence in many ways; according to Chomsky it is linguistics competence, and in Hymes' description, what is "formally possible" and "It is the domain of grammatical and lexical capacity" (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). According to Canale (1983), grammatical competence means the knowledge and skills that enable one to understand and express accurately the literal meaning of the utterances. Sociolinguistic

competence focuses on the mastery of the socio-cultural code of language use, such as appropriate application of vocabulary, register, politeness, and style in a given situation (Canale & Swain, 1980:6). Sociolinguistic competence emphasises the learner's knowledge and ability to use proper language in different socio-cultural contexts. It represents the learners' communicative competence to go beyond the literal meaning of utterances and to identify what is the impact of such utterances in particular social situations. It is, thus, very important to interpret utterances for their social meaning (Canale, 1983). According to Richards & Rodgers, sociolinguistic competence mean, "an understanding of the social context in which communication takes place, including role relationships, the shared information of the participants, and the communicative purpose of their interaction" (1986: 71).

Strategic competence highlights the knowledge of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, which enable learners to overcome difficulties when there is a termination in communication due to limited knowledge about the actual communicative event, and insufficient competence in other dimensions. Strategic competence also helps the learner keep the flow of communication (Canale & Swain, 1980:27). Richards & Rodgers hold that strategic competence is "coping strategies that communicators employ to initiate, terminate, maintain, repair, and redirect communication" (1986: 71).

Canale (1983) further elaborated their model of communicative competence by adding discourse competence, which means the ability to combine language structures into different types of cohesive and coherent texts, such as a letter, a political speech, poetry, an academic essay or a cooking recipe. Richards & Rodgers maintain that discourse competence refers to "the interpretation of individual message elements in terms of their interconnectedness and of how meaning is represented in relationship to the entire discourse or text" (1986: 71).

Savignon (1983; 1997) advocates the use of Canale's (1983) further developed four components as a classroom model for assessing communicative competence. She further



proposes five aspects to designing a communicative curriculum which comprise of language arts, language for a purpose, personal second language (L2) use, theatre arts, and beyond the classroom which help support both theoretical and practical foundations for CLT (Savignon, 1983, 1997). But it is clear that she was not solely relying on these components to define CLT, in particular with regard to the four competences she included,

Whatever the relative importance of the various components at any given level of overall proficiency, one must keep in mind the interactive nature of their relationships. The whole of communicative competence is always something other than the simple sum of its parts. (p. 50)

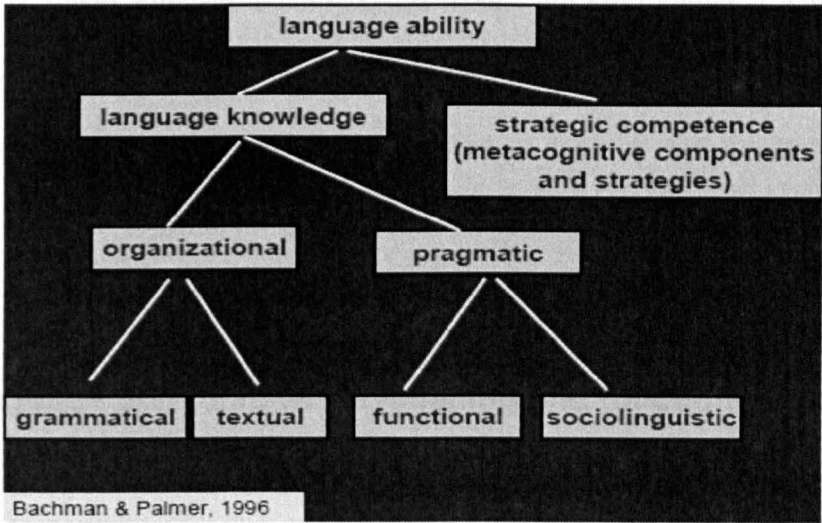
In addition to Canal and Swain's (1980) theoretical framework of communicative competence, more recently formulated models include many more components, such as dynamisms in language use and techniques of language use to achieve particular communicative goals. Savignon, for example characterizes communication as:

dynamic rather than a static ... It depends on the negotiation of meaning between two or more persons ... [It ] is context specific. Communication takes place in an infinite variety of situations, and success in a particular role depends on one's understanding of the context and on prior experience of a similar kind (Savignon, 1983, p. 8-9). And it is "relative, not absolute, and depends on the cooperation of all the participants" (ibid. p. 14-15).

Bachman (1990) develops a theoretical model of Communicative Language Ability (CLA), which includes three major components of language competence, strategic competence, and psycho-physiological mechanisms. He further divides language competence into two main aspects: organizational competence and pragmatic competence. Organizational competence focuses on gaining competence in two areas such as grammatical and textual, knowledge in grammar rules that enable learners to produce correct sentences, and ability to produce a meaningful text using grammar competence respectively. On the other hand, pragmatic competence comprises of functional competence: knowledge of functions e.g.

ideational, manipulative, heuristic, and imaginative, and sociolinguistic competence: knowledge to communicate in different socio-cultural contexts, such as dialects, varieties, register, cultural references etc. The second dimension of Bachman's theory is strategic competence, which helps to determine communicative goals, assess one's resources to communicate one's message, plan communication and execute the communicative intention. And the final component is psycho physiological mechanisms, which focus on the involvement of neurological and psychological processes to producing and understanding language, for example, auditory, visual and neuromuscular skills (Bachman 1990).

In 1996, Bachman & Palmer developed the following theoretical framework model of language ability, or 'communicative competence':



Source: Bachman & Palmer, 1996.

According to this theoretical model, 'language ability' focuses on language knowledge and strategic competence. Language knowledge is the knowledge of organizational dimension: grammatical and textual, and pragmatic aspect: and functional and sociolinguistics. In order to be competent in communication strategically a person needs to have knowledge of metacognitive components and strategies. The third major component of Bachman's (1990) theory, psycho-physiological mechanisms, is excluded in Bachman & Palmer's (1996) further developed model. Apart from this, the rest of the components are the same

as in Bachman's (1990) model theory. Bachman maintains that CLA means "consisting of both knowledge, or competence, and the capacity for implementing, or executing that competence in appropriate, contextualized communicative language use (Bachman 1990, P. 84).

Many people have defined the term communicative competence in many ways in different times and contexts. It may not be possible to have a generally defined theory of communicative competence, as it has been affected by various issues, such as definitional inconsistency, an individual way of gaining competence, the way in which communication competence is distinguished from similar concepts, and the formation of communicative competence, its features and dimensions. Regardless, the notion of communicative competence is central to CLT, and therefore requires teachers to be aware of its many characteristics. So, in CLT communicative competence means not only knowing how to produce grammatically correct sentences, but also knowing how and where to use these sentences appropriately. In this light, language study has to look at the function of language in context, both its linguistic context and its social or situational context. Another central component of CLT is a focus on meaning, which is discussed below.

### **3.3.2 A view of language that focuses on meaning and function**

A focus on meaning is also one of the major features of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). While Chomsky asserts that abstract grammatical knowledge is competence, Halliday's (1970) linguistic theory of communication focuses on the meaning of language used in communication. He holds that

Linguistics is concerned with the description of speech acts or texts, since only through the study of language in use are all the functions of language, and therefore all components of meanings, brought into focus (Halliday 1970:145).

Halliday's (1975) functional theory of language complements Hymes' view of communicative competence. He suggests that there are seven basic functions of language:

instrumental, regulatory, interactional, heuristic, imaginative, and representational functions (1975: 11-17). His theory rejects the dichotomy of competence and performance as used by Chomsky (1965) and Hymes (1972) and introduces meaning and function as being central to language and learning the skills of communication.

Proponents of CLT also focus on acquiring linguistic knowledge in a second language in order to perform different kinds of functions (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Richards & Rodgers (1986) suggest the following as a definition of this communicative view of language.

Language is a system for the expression of meaning. The primary function of language is for interaction and communication. The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses. The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse (p. 71).

In this section I explained two major theoretical assumptions of CLT; communicative competence and a focus on meaning and function. I made use of these two aspects to undertake my research work. I will define essential characteristics of CLT in the following section.

### **3.4 Defining characteristics of CLT**

In the previous section, I scoped out the central theoretical underpinnings of CLT. In the following, I will define the characteristics of a communicative approach to language teaching.

Richards and Rodgers (1986, p.72) suggest three underlying principles of the CLT approach. The first is the communicative principle, which is that real communication activities promote learning. The second is the task principle, which is that meaningful task activities promote learning. The third is the meaningfulness principle, which is that

meaningful and authentic language use activities engage learners and thus promote learning.

Similarly, Brown (2001) scopes out six underlying features that are common to any definition of CLT, which are summarized below:

- All dimensions of communicative competence should be the goals of CLT classroom practice. The goal, therefore, must be associated with organizational aspects of language and pragmatic considerations.
- Classroom activities focus on engaging students in real-life activities so that they can practice pragmatic, authentic, and functional uses of language for meaningful communication. Grammar rules are not the central focus of lessons, but taught as aspects of language that enable a learner to achieve the purpose of communication.
- Fluency and accuracy, the principles underlying communicative approach, complement each other. At times fluency may have to be given more emphasis than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use.
- Students eventually have to use the target language for meaningful communication in uncertain contexts outside the classroom. Classroom activities, therefore, must be designed with necessary skills that enable learners to communicate in those contexts.
- Students are provided opportunities to identify their own learning processes in order to understand their own learning styles, which enables them to develop independent learning strategies.
- The teacher is the facilitator and guide in classroom practice, but he or she is not expected to bestow everything in the class and, therefore, students are encouraged to interact and communicate with others appropriately.

(Brown, 2001: 43)

Moreover, Canale and Swain claim that "A communicative (or functional/notional) approach is organized on the basis of communicative functions (e.g. apologizing,

describing, inviting, promising) that a given learner or group of learners needs to know and emphasizes the ways in which particular grammatical forms may be used to express these functions appropriately” (1980:2).

According to Savignon (1997) CLT is a multidisciplinary approach that enables learners to develop their functional use of language participating in different communicative events. She claims that the main point of CLT is the understanding of language learning both from educational and political issues. Nunan (1989) maintains that in CLT language means a media to express meaning, activities involve speaking and listening focusing on fruitful tasks, and language use; learners’ needs are focused and include functional skills as well as linguistics aims; the learner is the negotiator and interactor and the teacher is the facilitator in the communicative process; and materials are task-based and authentic which promote communicative language use. CLT is associated with little more than an integrated teaching of grammar and function of language (Richards and Rogers 1986). Littlewood (1981) claims that communicative language teaching gives importance to functional as well as structural aspects of language which is a vital feature of CLT.

Berns (1990, p.104) claims the following summarized principles in defining CLT:

- Language teaching views language as a social tool to communicate for various purposes, either orally or in writing.
- A variety of materials and teaching aids, such as song, rhymes, poems, audio, video, gesture, posture, and body movements can be used for second language learners for the development of language skills, as it is with first language users.
- A learner's competence is considered contextually, that is, communication is the main goal; correctness is seen relatively, not absolutely.
- Considering the various contexts, the target language (L2) as well as the first language (L1) can be used as a model for learning and teaching,

keeping in view that gradually the L2 will replace the L1 in the classroom instruction

- Cultural issues play an important role in shaping speaker's communicative competence, both in their first and in the second language.
- A range of methods or techniques can be applied for teaching and learning.
- Learners' ideational, interpersonal, and textual use of language is considered as part of the development of their competence.
- Learners must be engaged in doing things, using the language for various purposes in all phases of learning, and their expectations and attitudes play an important role in curricular innovation.

(Berns, 1990, p.104)

In the following sections, I will define some of the main characteristics of CLT: the type of learning and teaching activities used in the classroom; the role of the learner; the role of the teacher; materials and classroom activities.

### **3.4.1 Learning and teaching activities**

Learning and teaching activities play an important role in defining major features of CLT. A wide variety of exercises and activities are used in the CLT classroom in order to teach how to communicate effectively in context. These include information sharing, negotiation of meaning, and interaction. There are also many different views on how to achieve effective communication through classroom activities.

Wright (1976) achieves it by showing out-of-focus slides, which the students attempt to identify. Byrne (1978) provides incomplete plans and diagrams, which students have to complete by asking for information. Allwright (1977) places a screen between students and gets one to place objects in a certain pattern: this pattern is then communicated to students behind the screen. Geddes and Sturtridge (1979) develop "jigsaw" listening in which students listen to different taped

materials and then communicate their content to others in the class. Most of these techniques operate by providing information to some and withholding it from others (Johnson 1982: 151).

It is also considered to be feasible to apply communicative principles to the teaching of any skills, at any level. Because of this diverse nature of CLT, procedures and techniques of classroom teaching can be varied. CLT procedures emphasise gradual change and development in terms of classroom activities and learning outcomes, not sudden changes (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983). Littlewood (1981) suggests a methodological procedure, which represents a sequence of activities. First he divides the activities into two major types: pre-communicative activities and communicative activities. Further he divides these into four categories: pre-communicative activities are divided into structural and quasi-communicative activities and communicative activities are divided into functional communication activities and social interaction activities. Littlewood (1981) suggests that classroom activities start with pre-communicative activities and finish with communicative activities. In pre-communicative activities, learners are provided with opportunities to practise some skills separately that enable them to be trained in the part-skills of communication. Activities include different types of drill or question-and-answer practice. With the help of pre-communicative knowledge and skills, the learner has to communicate for meaning in communicative activities, such as cued dialogues, role play, discussion, debate, etc. (Littlewood, 1981:86). As Littlewood suggests, the emphasis may be placed on authentic communication as either the goal or the means of language teaching. Howatt similarly labels “learning to use English” as the “weak” version and “using English to learn it” as the “strong” version of CLT (1984: 279).

### **3.4.2 The role of the learner**

CLT mainly focuses on the process of communication rather than learning abstract grammatical knowledge. Because of this, learners have different roles in contrast to the



traditional second language classroom (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Breen and Candlin, 1980; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). CLT is a learner-centred approach; it allows students more time and more freedom in the classroom (Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Breen and Candlin, 1980, Littlewood, 1981; Berns, 1990; Brown, 2001; Nunan 1989; Williams, 1995). In the CLT classroom, students do most of the speaking; they talk to each other in pair work and group work, they talk to the teacher, and they leave their seats to complete a given task. In this way, the classroom becomes responsive and participatory (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Williams, 1995). Generally, students are encouraged to take part in such activities in order to gain confidence, so that they can use the target language for further communication. As a result, students become more responsible for their learning (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Breen and Candlin, 1980; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Berns, 1990; Brown, 2001).

In the CLT classroom students are also asked to identify the functions and meaning of language in a given context by themselves and to talk about it. In particular they are encouraged to learn cooperatively through negotiating (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Williams, 1995; Brown, 2001). The learner has the freedom to provide feedback about the purposes of the curriculum, and the appropriateness of methodology considering his own learning experiences and achievements, which ultimately contribute to curricula innovation (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Berns, 1990). So in expression and negotiation, the learner adopts the dual role of being, first, a potential teacher for other learners and, second, an informant to the teacher concerning his own learning progress (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Berns, 1990; Brown, 2001).

### **3.4.3 The role of the teacher**

In CLT several roles are assumed for teachers. Keeping view of the theoretical framework of CLT, the teacher is a facilitator and guide in the process of communication between all

participants in the classroom. And he/she is not supposed to be a controller of the session (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Littlewood, 1981; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Brown, 2001). As an interdependent participant, the teacher needs to share the responsibility of learning and teaching with learners actively, and in this way the teacher can be a co-participant in the process, which helps to create a friendly learning environment for the learner (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983). CLT assumes that the teacher is an organiser of resources within a classroom for communication and communicative activities (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Littlewood, 1981; Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

The teacher is also considered a resource, so that she or he can facilitate and support the communicative process when the learner needs it (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Brown, 2001). The teacher is a seer of potential in a CLT classroom, in that a teacher's responsibility is to find out the various mixed abilities of students in the classroom and provide support for them. And this can be done formally, informally or personally (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). The teacher has the opportunity to be a researcher and learner in the CLT classroom in that the teacher has to reflect on their teaching – about good sides, less good sides, and bad sides of methods and activities used in the classroom – so that measures can be taken for future action (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Littlewood, 1981; Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

#### **3.4.4 Materials**

Materials play a vital role in the CLT classroom to promote and influence communicative language use. A range of materials have been used to facilitate CLT, such as text-based, task-based, authentic, audio and video materials (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). A number of text-based materials have been designed which focus on language practice rather than structure in order to direct and facilitate CLT, such as Morrow & Johnson's *Communicate*, Watcyn-Jones's *Pair Work*, and *English Language Syllabus in Malaysian Schools*

(Richards & Rodgers, 1986). A wide variety of task-based materials, such as exercise handbooks, cue cards, activity cards, pair-communication practice materials, and student-interaction practice booklets have been designed to support CLT classes (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

CLT focuses on using authentic materials in the classroom. These may include language based on artefacts, such as signs, magazines, advertisements, newspapers, maps, pictures, symbols, graphs, and charts, etc. (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Littlewood, 1981; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Brown, 2001). In addition, Berardo (2006) includes authentic materials such as newspapers, television programmes, restaurant menus, magazines, the internet, movies, songs, brochures, comics, and literature.

### **3.4.5 Summary**

From the above literature review, I will draw upon some of the characteristics CLT which will be relevant in my present research study.

According to CLT principles language learning means communication learning, in other words, interaction is a major feature in the CLT classroom (Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Breen and Candlin, 1980, Littlewood, 1981; Berns, 1990; Brown, 2001; Nunan1989). Finocchiaro and Brumfit suggest, "Language learning is learning to communicate" (1981: 91-3). In order to achieve this goal, CLT teachers engage the learners with a number of communicative tasks, such as pair work, group work, individual work, debating, role play, dialogues etc. in the classroom. Learners are encouraged to participate actively in the communication process in order to develop their communicative competence (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Littlewood, 1981).

CLT focuses on learning language for real-life purposes (Littlewood, 1981; Berns, 1990; Brown, 2001). In this global era, language learning is necessary for higher study, trade and business, diplomatic purposes, overseas jobs, good governance and administrative services. As a result, this permits many kinds of activity and a variety of material that promote

competent communication learning for various communicative purposes in a real-life context. And CLT also emphasizes taking materials from both local and global contexts to involve learners with different situations of real-life.

CLT focuses on contextual uses of language for an effective communication (Berns, 1990; Brown, 2001). It means that one must know how to make correct sentences, and at the same time, to know where and when to use these sentences appropriately for meaningful communication. In order to achieve this goal, in the textbooks materials are designed so that the learners practise language items in context (Widdoson, 1978; Littlewood, 1981; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Finocchiaro and Brumfit claim that "Contextualization is a basic premise" in CLT (1983: 91-3).

Authentic text is another pre-requisite of CLT classroom practice (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). The text is written following the CLT principles and its various measures of classroom practices. It provides learners with a variety of activities to practise and a range of materials to deal with in the classroom for learning language skills (see e.g. Breen and Candlin, 1980; Littlewood, 1981; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Nunan 1989; Williams, 1995, Brown, 2001; Berardo, 2006).

CLT primarily focuses on using target language in classroom practice (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Littlewood, 1981; Brown, 2001) but it also permits a limited use of L1 in need of situation and context. In some contexts, the use of the native language along with the target language may serve better for teaching and learning meaningful communication. Finocchiaro and Brumfit maintain, "Judicious use of the native language is accepted where feasible" (1983: 91-3).

Separate teaching of grammar is usually not advocated in CLT as grammar is considered as secondary to meaning (Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983). However, practising pre-communicative activities with a view to communicate further is also feasible and accepted in some EFL contexts. Littlewood (1981), for example, divides CLT activities into pre-communicative activities and communicative activities.

CLT focuses on learning four basic skills of language: listening, speaking, reading and writing in an integrated way (Widdoson, 1978; Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Littlewood, 1981; Berns, 1990; Brown, 2001). Learners are encouraged to learn these four skills in order to communicate appropriately. And, because of this, CLT classes must be interactive. Learners are encouraged to deal with a variety of activity to achieve these goals.

CLT focuses mainly on fluency and contextually accurate language use (Berns, 1990; Brown, 2001; Littlewood, 1981). Finocchiaro and Brumfit claimed that "Fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal: accuracy is judged not in the abstract but in context" (1983:91-3).

CLT is a learner-centred approach; it allows students more time, and more freedom in the classroom (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Littlewood, 1981; Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983; Williams, 1995). In the CLT classroom, students do most of the speaking; they talk to each other in pair work, group work and they leave their seats to complete a given task (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). Generally, students are encouraged to do various activities in the classroom in order to grow confidence, so that they can use the target language for further communication. As a result, students become more responsible for their learning (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Breen and Candlin, 1980; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Berns, 1990; Brown, 2001).

Learners have the freedom to provide feedback about the purposes of the curriculum, and the appropriateness of methodology considering their own learning experiences and achievements, which ultimately contribute to curricula innovation (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Berns, 1990). So in expression and negotiation, learners adopt the dual role of being, first, a potential teacher for other learners and, second, an informant to the teacher concerning their own learning progress (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Berns, 1990; Brown, 2001).

Teachers in communicative classrooms will find themselves talking less and listening more becoming active facilitators of their students' learning (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). The teacher sets up the exercise, but because the students' performance is the goal, the teacher must step back and observe, sometimes acting as referee or monitor. Breen and Candlin claim that the CLT teacher has three roles to perform, firstly, as a facilitator of communication among participants, various activities and texts, secondly, with the teaching and learning group, he acts an independent participant, and thirdly he plays the role of a researcher and learner to contribute in policy making (Breen and Candlin 1980: 110).

Many scholars have pointed out that CLT is flexible, both in principles and practices, in accordance with situation and context (Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Littlewood, 1981). From the above discussion, it can be seen that CLT has a rich and varied theoretical framework, practical considerations and procedures for classroom practice. For my research study, I will draw upon the following key characteristics of CLT, which seem most relevant for the Bangladeshi context based on the studies discussed above. These features are:

- Students learn to communicate by communicating
- Language learning should reflect real-life purposes
- Students need to be prepared to deal with authentic language use
- Skills are practised in an integrated way
- Grammar (focus on form) is seen as secondary to meaning
- Fluency is encouraged as well as accuracy
- Cultural and pragmatic factors of contexts should be taken into consideration.
- The approach is learner-centred
- Cooperative and participatory learning is encouraged
- The L1 may be used to support learning
- The teacher's role is that of facilitator, seer of potential, researcher and learner.

## **3.5 The landscape of CLT in EFL contexts**

In this section I will describe some of the EFL contexts in which CLT has been implemented and explore some of the difficulties and problems that have been encountered. Before doing this, however, I will discuss the difference between ESL and EFL contexts.

### **3.5.1 Differences between ESL and EFL Contexts**

CLT has been implemented in both English as a second language (ESL) and English as foreign language (EFL) contexts. These two contexts are notably different from one another. While both ESL and EFL contexts target teaching English to non-native speakers, ESL takes place within an English-speaking environment. This represents students learning English in the United States, Canada, England, Australia, or any other country where English is the primary language of interaction, instruction, communication, and business. As a result, students live and interact with native speakers, and have ample opportunities to use the target language (Ellis, 1996).

Ellis differentiates ESL and EFL contexts by stating that:

ESL is integrative, in that it is designed to help individuals function in the community, EFL is a part of the school curriculum, and therefore subject to contextual factors such as support from the principal and the local community, government policy etc. It is also dependent on the teacher's language proficiency, teaching resources, the availability of suitable materials... (p. 21 5)

Thus for ESL students, language learning is a must in order to grow and survive in society. Their learning of language is more than a pedagogical subject (Ellis, 1996). Apart from this, in most cases, students in ESL classrooms usually do not interact in the same native language with their classmates. Their interactions and friendships in and outside the classroom mainly depend on the learning and development of the target language. In such

contexts, the culturally mixed classroom can play a vital role as a higher motivational factor for learning the target language quickly (Ellis, 1996:1).

In EFL contexts, on the other hand, generally there is no English-speaking environment outside the classroom, and no reinforcement of learning the target language (Ellis, 1996). Moreover, EFL teachers are the source of the target language (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Brown, 2001). English is a foreign language in countries like Japan, Korea, China, Pakistan, Egypt, Yemen, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, as well as Bangladesh. In these contexts English is not the primary medium for interaction, instruction, and communication among people. English is a compulsory subject of education curriculum and the students have exposure to the target language in the classroom only (Ellis, 1996). Students often learn English in these contexts with an aim to pass the university entrance exams (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Gorsuch, 2000; Li, 1998; Liao, 2000). It is also found that in EFL contexts, students generally use the national language for everyday conversation, interaction, and business (Liao, 2000). It is also important to note that like many other ESL contexts, students' learning in EFL settings may be influenced by various motivational factors, but may not have the common interest or dedication to language learning (Li, 1998).

Research shows that although there has been a widespread adoption of CLT in ESL countries, the adoption of CLT in EFL countries has generally been less widely accepted (see e.g., Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Fox, 1993; Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Lewis & McCook 2002; Li, 1998; Penner 1995; Rollman, 1994; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Thompson, 1996). The following section presents several studies which investigated the implementation of CLT in various EFL contexts.

### **3.5.2 Use of CLT in EFL contexts and barriers to adopting CLT**

There is a large body of research dealing with CLT innovation in EFL contexts. Whereas some studies have emphasised local needs for English, particular English teaching strategies and the learning environment in the EFL countries and the importance and



success of traditional language teaching methods (Sampson, 1984, 1990; Imam, 2005), others have strongly recommended the adoption of CLT in EFL countries (Li, 1984; Prabhu, 1987). However, the majority of studies have identified the difficulties in implementing CLT in EFL contexts (see e.g., Anderson, 1993; Ellis, 1994; Burnaby and Sun, 1989; Hu, 2002; Hu, 2005b; Rao, 1996; Chau and Chung, 1987; Penner, 1995; Chick, 1996; Li, 1998; Sato and Kleinsasser, 1999; Savignon, 2002, 2003; Mustafa, 2001; Gorsuch, 2000; Sano et al., 1984; Lewis & McCook 2002; Liao, 2000; Pandian, 2004; Bataineh et al., 2011; Razmjoo and Riazi, 2006; Gonzalez, 1985; Kirkpatrick, 1984; Savignon and Wang 2003; Shamin, 1996; Valdes and Jhones, 1991; Gamal and Debra, 2001; Shim & Baik, 2004; Samimy & Kobayashi, 2004).

Ellis (1994) investigated the appropriateness of the communicative approach in Vietnam. His study reports many challenges, such as class size, grammar-oriented examinations, inadequate teacher training, lack of communicative language materials, lack of exposure to authentic language, and suitable learning environments in implementing CLT in the context of Vietnam. Shamin (1996) states that learners' resistance, among many other problems, is a barrier to introducing CLT in Pakistan.

Kirkpatrick (1984) conducted a study in order to investigate the suitability of CLT in Singaporean secondary schools. The study reports that the grammar-based language syllabus and the local use of CLT are factors that challenge the implementation of CLT in the context of Singapore. According to Gonzalez's (1985) study of CLT in Philippine rural areas, the mismatch between English instruction and people's needs, and the infrequent use of English in this context are problems.

Gorsuch's (2000) study identifies grammar-focused examinations, teachers' preference for traditional teaching methods, and pressures about university entrance exams as reasons for problems in implementing CLT in Japan. Apart from this, the study reports that teachers did not use the target language in the classroom, as they believe students were not ready to use and produce it. Other research conducted by Sano et al. (1984) reports that Japanese

students did not feel a pressing need to use English, and therefore, they did not concentrate on gaining communicative competence in the language. A study by Sato and Kleinsasser (1999) suggests that the gap between teachers' actual understanding of CLT and their practice in the classroom can be an obstacle in implementing CLT. Other research in Japan reports that English study is closely associated with university entrance examinations, which emphasize grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension. Because of this, students and teachers give less importance to communicative aspects of English (see, Samimy & Kobayashi 2004). Moreover, Samimy & Kobayashi also assert that "cultural mismatches between theoretical underpinnings of CLT and the Japanese culture of learning" are barriers to CLT in Japan (2004, p. 253).

According to Burnaby and Sun (1989) Chinese teachers faced challenges to using CLT in their English classrooms due to constraints, such as the context of the wider curriculum, traditional teaching methods, class sizes and schedules, resources and equipment, deficiencies in target language and target language cultural knowledge. Penner's (1995) study reports how Chinese language classroom culture prevents pedagogical change in this context. She asserts that "because of the discrepancies in educational theory, roles, expectations, methods, material use, and structural concerns, a new Chinese way needs to be developed" (p.12). Moreover, Liao's (2000) research points out that teachers' lack of proficiency, lack of cultural knowledge of the target language, lack of familiarity with the new method, the negative influence of education tradition on teachers, and grammar-based examination pressure are all obstacles to successful application of CLT in China. Anderson's (1993) study of CLT in China reports such difficulties as lack of appropriate assessment system via CLT, lack of teachers' communicative competence in English, lack of properly trained teachers, lack of communicative texts and materials and lack of students' adjustment to CLT. In addition, Hu (2002) contends that the learning culture in the Chinese classroom is one of the most important potential challenges to adopting CLT in China. According to him, Chinese traditional learning culture is one in which "education

is conceived more as a process of knowledge accumulation than as a process of using knowledge for immediate purposes, and the preferred model of teaching is a mimetic or epistemic one that emphasizes knowledge transmission" (Hu 2005b, p. 653). Research suggests that the methodology of CLT comes into conflict with the culturally constructed teacher-centred classroom in China. Rao's (1996) study also presents similar arguments. Chau and Chung (1987) conducted a study to assess the attitudes of Hong Kong educators towards using CLT. It reports that teachers did not use CLT as it takes too much preparation time. Savignon and Wang (2003) investigated Taiwanese learners' attitudes and perceptions with regard to classroom practice. Their findings suggest an inconsistency between learner needs and preferences.

Li (1998) contends that the sources of challenges in implementing CLT in Korea are multiple and include the teacher, the students, the educational system, and CLT itself. His study reports several challenges, such as teachers' deficiency in spoken English; deficiency in strategic and sociolinguistic competence; lack of training in CLT; few opportunities for retraining in CLT; misconceptions about CLT; lack of expertise in material development; students' low English proficiency; little motivation for communicative competence; resistance to class participation, large classes; grammar-based examinations; insufficient funding for equipment and facilities; lack of support from administration, CLT's inadequate account of EFL teaching; and lack of effective and efficient assessment instruments. In many contexts, for example South Korea, Japan, China and Vietnam, studies have shown that grammar-based examinations are a constraint to implementing CLT in the classroom (Li, 1998; Shim & Baik, 2004; Samimy & Kobayashi, 2004; Liao, 2000; Ellis (1994). A study by Lewis and McCook (2002) examines the lack of teachers' conceptual knowledge about CLT, their retained for local education theories, and the practice both traditional and CLT methods restrict fostering of CLT principles in Asia.

CLT implementation faces challenges not only in Asian contexts but also outside the Asian context. Valdes and Jhones (1991) investigated CLT in Cuba. Their study identifies

barriers such as teachers' deficiencies in English, their preference for traditional language teaching methods, the lack of exposure to the target language, lack of authentic materials, the need to redesign the assessment system, and the need to introduce communicative materials and textbooks. CLT focuses on students' interaction and active participation and teachers' friendly and facilitating role which create a democratic environment in the classroom. Chick's (1996) research identifies these principles of CLT as barriers on the part of teachers and students to adopting a communicative approach to the teaching of English in KwaZulu, South Africa.

Besides, teachers' beliefs and attitudes, there are many other economic constraints in the way of successful CLT implementation in Egypt, such as lack of proper teacher training, low pay, lack of resources, large unequipped classrooms, teachers' lack of English proficiency and limited knowledge of CLT pedagogy. The inconsistency between classroom instruction and the examination system, and experienced teachers' unwillingness to use a communicative approach are barriers in Egypt (Gamal and Debra 2001). CLT practice differs significantly among high schools and institutes in Iran. Iranian teachers have high and positive attitudes towards CLT and its principles. However, a discrepancy was found between their attitude and classroom practice (Razmjoo and Riazi, 2006).

In the Arab world, Bataineh et al (2011) claim that teachers' reliance on traditional classroom instruction, large classes, overloaded class periods, and a discouraging cultural view of CLT are the main challenges to implementing CLT in the Yemeni EFL classroom. When the Indonesian Ministry of Education took the initiative to reform English instruction, Mustafa (2001) identified difficulties and challenges to the uptake of the communicative approach in Indonesia, such as lack of exposure to English language use in real-life situations, teachers' lack of confidence in using the target language in the classroom, inadequate class time slot, and large classrooms; a crowded curriculum; form-

focused competitive tests, lack of authentic learning materials; teachers' tendency to teach grammar and syntax; and lack of an English-speaking environment outside the classroom.

Pandian's (2004: 280) study in Malaysia reports that "when the initial euphoria of implementing the concepts laid down by the KBSR [Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Rendah (New Primary School Curriculum)] and KBSM [Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah (New Secondary School Curriculum)] under the notion of communicative competence had died down, classroom teaching seems to have returned to the chalk-and-talk drill method".

A summary of CLT research conducted in Bangladesh is given in Section 1.2.1. The most significant barriers or difficulties in implementing CLT, reported by EFL teachers and/or researchers (Anderson, 1993; Ellis, 1994; Burnaby and Sun, 1989; Hu, 2002; Hu, 2005b; Rao, 1996; Chau and Chung, 1987; Penner, 1995; Chick, 1996; Li, 1998; Sato and Kleinsasser, 1999; Savignon, 2002, 2003; Mustafa, 2001; Gorsuch, 2000; Sano et al., 1984; Lewis & McCook 2002; Liao, 2000; Pandian, 2004; Bataineh et al., 2011; Razmjoo and Riazi, 2006; Gonzalez, 1985; Kirkpatrick, 1984; Savignon and Wang 2003; Shamin, 1996; Valdes and Jhones, 1991; Gamal and Debra, 2001; Shim & Baik, 2004; Samimy & Kobayashi, 2004) in the reviewed literature, are:

- lack of administrative support
- lack of resources
- lack of sufficient English language knowledge
- wider curriculum
- large class size
- discrepancy/inconsistency between CLT syllabus and nationally administered exams
- teachers' favouritism for traditional methods
- lack of authentic learning materials
- Lack of conceptual knowledge about CLT and CLT pedagogy
- Cultural barriers

- Gap between learning and teaching preferences
- Lack of English speaking environment

### **3.5.3 Teacher Misconceptions**

Exploring the suitability of CLT in EFL contexts, it is noticeable that teachers' beliefs and perceptions create misconceptions and misinterpretations about CLT. This is one of the major barriers in implementation and success of CLT in EFL contexts (see, for example, Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Fox, 1993; Gamal & Debra, 2001; Karavas-Doukas, 1996; Rollman, 1994; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Thompson, 1996). The misconceptions and misinterpretations of CLT are associated with cultural values and practices of EFL countries. And different educational values and practices are the main reasons for difficulties in implementing CLT in the respective contexts (see Li, 1998; Penner, 1995; Ellis, 1994; Lewis and McCook, 2002). Apart from the differences between ESL and EFL contexts, and that of culture, EFL teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and practices also make it difficult to implement CLT in those contexts (see Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Ellis, 1994; Fox, 1993; Karavas- Doukas, 1996; Rollman, 1994; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Sun & Cheng; 2002; Thompson, 1996).

Apart from practical difficulties, CLT has been implemented in different ways in East Asia, with the term almost meaning different things to different English teachers. One of the secondary school teachers interviewed by Li (1998: 689) mentions two misconceptions of CLT in South Korea: "Before attending this teacher education program, I thought that communicative language teaching does not teach grammar and only teaches speaking". Li's (1984) survey research of 164 teachers in Mainland China identified similar uncertainties that there is no grammar teaching in CLT, and it focuses only on speaking: "Some teachers have a misunderstanding of CLT. In their view CLT is just a plethora of speaking activities without any learning of language structures" (p. 76). These are common conceptions in other contexts too.

Thompson (1996) points out the four main misconceptions about CLT: "CLT means not teaching grammar; CLT means teaching only speaking; CLT means pair work, which means role-play; and CLT means expecting too much from the teacher". He claims that these misconceptions are constraints to implementing CLT.

As Karavas-Doukas (1996) stated, "one of the causes of the discrepancy between prescribed theory and classroom practice may be teacher attitude" (p. 187). According to Richardson (1996, 1994), as cited by Sato and Kleinsasser (1999), "beliefs influence teaching practice more directly than knowledge" (p. 496) and "in order to understand how teachers make sense of teaching and learning, one should focus on teachers' beliefs and practices" (p.496).

Some of the misconceptions investigated by Thomson (1996) are also seen in research conducted by Sato and Kleinsasser (1999). Their study reports that teachers held misconceptions about CLT and there were discrepancies between their beliefs and practices, which acts as a barrier to the implementation of CLT. They identify that teachers believed that CLT depends heavily on speaking and listening skills; it focuses little on grammar teaching, and it involves time-consuming activities.

In another study, Burnaby and Sun (1989) maintain that English teachers in China believed that the communicative approach was useful only for those students who had a plan to go to an English-speaking country to live and study, and whose major subject was English, and, therefore, not for all students. Burnaby and Sun's (1989) study is consistent with Ellis's (1994) finding that Vietnamese English teachers believed that CLT is not culturally suitable for Vietnam, and it is mainly a methodology for the ESL context. In addition, Chinese teachers believed that CLT activities were a waste of time; they seemed like games rather than serious learning. They felt they were not teaching when they use such activities and anticipated the students would complain against them (Burnaby and Sun 1989).

The discrepancy between teachers' attitudes and classroom practices resulted in a misapplication of CLT in many EFL contexts. It has also been found that even teachers who have favourable attitudes towards CLT may have classroom practices that differ significantly from the communicative approach. Karavas-Doukas (1996) maintains "Teachers tended to follow an eclectic approach, exhibiting features of both traditional and communicative approaches in their classroom practices" (p.193).

Moreover, in many situations, it has been found that teachers received training in CLT, but they had a skewed impression of the CLT approach after training. They then tended to misapply CLT when back in the classroom. As Karavas-Doukas suggests, "when the teachers return to their classroom they misinterpret the new ideas and translate them to conform to their existing classroom routines- at the same time believing that they are doing exactly what the new approach calls for" (p.194). In order to avoid this kind of inconsistency, teachers' existing attitudes and beliefs must be taken into account before introducing the new approach (Karavas-Doukas, 1996). Exploring Egyptian teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards CLT, Gamal and Debra (2001) maintain that cultural tradition was one major difficulty. Culturally, Egyptian students avoid expressing views, opinions and ideas, as they are afraid of losing face or offending others.

Moreover, in Egypt, teachers are seen as knowledgeable, and they are not supposed to play games with their students or ask students to role-play, as they believe they might not be seen as doing their job. This research has similarities with Burnaby and Sun's (1989), where Chinese teachers felt they were not teaching when they used CLT activities and anticipated that the students would complain about them.

In the above literature review, challenges, difficulties and barriers to CLT implementation in different contexts have been discussed. In addition to this some misconceptions of CLT have also been discussed. Although these studies highlight many of the principal problems in implementing curricular innovation prompted by CLT, many of the studies take the researcher's perspective. Teachers' and learners' perceptions of innovation related to CLT



remain largely unexplored. This research study will explore these perceptions of innovation related to CLT answering the questions designed in Section 1.3.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have explained the background and theoretical assumptions of CLT. Following a broad literature study of CLT, I have also defined some of the CLT principles which the Bangladeshi government has been encouraging teachers to practice in the ELT classroom. Furthermore, a study of CLT implementation and difficulties in applying CLT in the EFL contexts has also been presented in this chapter.

# **Chapter: 4 Research design and methodology**

## **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology I applied in this study. First, I will start discussing it from a broad characterization of qualitative research; I will then define ethnography, an approach which is drawn upon in this study. The three basic principles of ethnography that I adopted for this study will be explained: time frames, insider vs outsider perspectives, and data collection instruments. I shall then consider arguments about validity, reliability and generalization related to qualitative research. I will discuss the access process and the ethical considerations undertaken in this study. I will also discuss the details of the context including the schools where my data was collected and the teachers and students observed and interviewed. Finally I will explain the data collection methods, the overall data set and the data analysis framework applied in this study.

## **4.2 Methodology**

Qualitative methods are most appropriate to gain insight into the problems and difficulties of students and teachers as they help to gain a holistic picture of the challenges in implementing CLT. They give insight not only into teachers' and students' beliefs about their teaching practices but also into outside factors that influence education, such as educational policy, socioeconomic conditions of teachers and students, facilities, location of school and school infrastructure. Creswell asserts that

A qualitative study is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting (1998:34).

The methodological approach used in this study is derived from the conceptual framework outlined in chapter three. It is concerned with the way in which communicative language teaching is practiced and perceived. This includes classroom pedagogy, teaching materials, and the examination system. Insight into these areas was obtained by analyzing classroom practice and by conducting interviews with teachers and students.

A number of previous studies have investigated CLT implementations in the EFL contexts and this study of Bangladesh has considered the methods used. Burnaby and Sun (1989) adopted a mixed method study to investigate the views of tertiary English teachers regarding CLT implementation in the Chinese context. Sano et al. (1984) carried out a qualitative study in secondary level English classrooms to investigate students' perceptions and views about CLT in Japan. Chung and Huang (2009) did a research study among senior high school students to find out their views of CLT implementation in Taiwan. Savignon and Wang (2003) conducted a quantitative study to investigate Taiwanese students' attitudes and perception in regard to CLT classroom practice. Li (1998) applied a qualitative study to investigate teachers' difficulties and challenges in implementing CLT in South Korea.

Many researchers have studied students' views regarding CLT innovation in EFL contexts (Sano et al., 1984; Chung and Huang, 2009; Savignon and Wang, 2003; Shamin, 1996), and research studies were also conducted investigating teachers' difficulties in regard to CLT implementation in EFL contexts (Burnaby and Sun, 1989 and Li, 1998). However, investigations into both teachers' and students' problems and difficulties related to CLT remain largely unexplored. This study examined teachers' and students' problems and difficulties implementing CLT in secondary level English classrooms in Bangladesh. To carry out this research work I applied an ethnographical approach, which is explained and justified in the following sections.

### 4.3 An ethnographical approach

Given the purpose of the study (i.e. to reveal the teachers' and learners' perceived difficulties in implementing communicative language teaching in secondary education in Bangladesh), I drew on an ethnographic approach to collecting data in Bangladesh. Though my research is not ethnographic in the strictest sense of the term, it is consistent with more recent uses of ethnography in educational studies, which I will detail below.

Hammersley suggests that ethnography is 'a specific form of qualitative inquiry' (2006:3). The origins of ethnography are rooted in anthropology, but with the development of social research its application has been widened, and it is now one of the more commonly used methods of inquiry in education research. That is because the ethnographic approach is useful in understanding the complexities of what is going on in educational contexts. According to Denzin, this approach 'captures and records the voices of lived experiences, contextualizes experience goes beyond mere fact, and surface appearances present the details of context and emotion, and the webs of social relationships that joins persons to one another' (1994:83). Therefore the traditional role of an ethnographer is to enter the world of a new group of people, and spend a substantial period of time understanding their customs and way of life, until total absorption in the community renders this way of life normal and unquestioned. Traditional ethnographic researchers often take the stance of a 'stranger' (Schutz 1964) while doing research on a social group with significant characteristics.

More recently, however, in educational research ethnography has been more widely applied, perhaps, because of its popularity and success in 'developing understanding of social and cultural processes in education settings' (Jeffrey and Troman 2004: 535). Holliday points to the usefulness of ethnography in a much wider domain, which can be to study 'any human entity' and he further argues that it can be useful in investigating the 'hidden curriculum' in a school (1996), for example the inconsistency between teacher training and teachers' knowledge, perceptions and practice.

Despite the assertion that ethnography can be used in 'any human entity', its application in the study of applied linguistics, particularly in international English language teaching, is comparatively new compared with its application in general education. Taking ethnography from broadening perspectives and its usage in English language education, Holliday argues that:

The role and value of ethnography ...can be seen in the work which is ... concerned with what many might consider 'exotic' scenarios far away from the 'ideal' classroom... In reality, they are not exotic at all, but represent contexts found all over the world, where English language education takes place in a melee of problematic attitudes and expectations surrounding relationships between teachers, students, experts, administrators, communities, and large classes (1996:239).

This argument once again suggests that ethnography is a form of inquiry which is useful to draw on when investigating ELT classroom pedagogy and practice in terms of CLT principles and practices to explore teachers' and learners' perceived difficulties in implementing communicative language teaching. There are three main aspects of ethnography that have been relevant to this study: Time frames, Insider/Outsider status, and Use of multiple methods. These will be discussed in the following section.

#### **4.3.1 Time frames**

Time frame is one of the basic principles of an ethnographic approach. In traditional ethnographic approaches, a lengthy contact period is one of the crucial components. In fact, traditional ethnography would take place over a period of several years. As Hammersley argues:

This (ethnography) usually involves fairly lengthy contact, through participant observation in relevant settings, and/or through relatively open-ended interviews

designed to understand people's perspectives, perhaps completed by the study of various sorts of document – official, publicly available or personal (2006:4).

However, the pace of life in modern society has quickened dramatically. For instance, Wolcott asserts that 'The intensification of academic life', 'the pressures from funding bodies for quick completion' and most of all 'the time for publication make sustained 12 month minimum research periods a luxury' (Wolcott 1995:77). As a consequence, the contemporary ethnographer now 'links brief visits that extend over a long period of time, so that the brevity of the periods is mollified by the effect of long-term acquaintance' (Wolcott 1995:77).

Jeffery and Troman (2004) in their article 'Time for ethnography' suggest that modern ethnographic studies apply a range of different time modes rather than the immersion approach of classical anthropological studies. They identify a 'compressed time mode' where ethnographers live with the participants almost permanently for a short period ranging from a few days to a month, and a 'selective intermittent time mode' ethnography, lasting from three months up to two years, which allows a specific approach to data collection and progressive focusing during the study. They further suggest a 'recurrent time mode' where the sampling is led by 'temporal phases', for example an inspection or examination period in a school. The research is selective and specific about the place and people with whom they spend time. They also suggest that selective time in 'the field' is directed by the focus of the study and the decision about the analytical categories (Jeffery and Troman 2004).

The 'selective intermittent time mode' with depth of studies its dominant criterion and progressive focusing for sustained period its main characteristics is the mode that I applied in my research. This allowed me to collect data and reflect on what was happening before deciding what to collect next. Given the view of selective intermittent time mode, I spent six months with the participants collecting data during my PhD fieldwork. In addition to that, I also spent time in the field during my MRes study and for EIA research work.

### 4.3.2 Insider vs. outsider status

As far as an ethnographic approach is concerned, the researcher's status is a vital factor. The traditional focus of an ethnographic approach is to study the 'other' and the status of the researcher is a 'stranger' in the researched 'ethnos' or community. However, the broad application of this inquiry process allows researchers to adopt a wide range of positions – this is particularly common in applied linguistics (Brumfit 1985). This is in part to do with the nature of applied linguistics researchers, who – like me – often start research work a little later in their lives than students in other disciplines. They also generally have professional experience in the field. As with my case, Rampton et al (2004) suggests that for 'mature' students who are comparatively senior in age, 'the move from work or family commitments into research is often more motivated by interests generated in practical activity than by a fascination with academic theory per se'. Hence, Schutz (1976) suggests this movement as 'a shift from the inside moving outwards, rather than a move from the outside inwards'. And this shift can be associated with his view of the 'homecomer' (1976) who sees work and family anew, old ways familiar yet strange. Such was my position as a researcher in the Bangladeshi educational context.

As explained in Chapter 1, I am a researcher who was born and brought up in Bangladesh and received education through the Bangladeshi educational system from primary school to higher secondary education. I also have experience of working with secondary school English teachers as a teacher trainer, and have taught English at both higher secondary and tertiary level in Bangladesh for over ten years. Thus I am familiar with what is going on in the context, what often happens inside the classroom and how perceived values and beliefs in education shape the models of English teaching and learning. Moreover, I am familiar with and sensitive to the circumstances that exist there. Hence my work, education, and working experience in Bangladesh made me a complete insider. This insider status and cultural membership allowed me to see things that might otherwise go unnoticed.

When conducting my research, I was confident that having grown up and had experience of teaching in tertiary level in Bangladesh, it would be relatively easy to collect and analyse my data. Moreover, as a tertiary level teacher who completed secondary school 19 years ago, I thought it would be easy for me to maintain an analytic distance to my data. However, I also recognised that it would take a conscious effort to separate my pre-conceived ideas from what I was observing. Indeed, Emerson (1983, p.184) states, fieldwork is a 'deeply personal as well as a scientific project', where subjectivity and emotional experiences are bound up with the interpretative process. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) further suggest that the researcher cannot help but bring their own biographies and subjectivities to their field of enquiry. According to Eisner (1993) in social science research a value-free interpretation is impossible. So, instead of denying that my subjectivity could contaminate the data, in this study, my approach was to lay it out in the open and make it part of the analytic process. Being reflective allows researchers to reflect on their own interactions, feelings, and make this clear in their reports. Moreover, in view of the general criticisms of ethnographical work, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) argue that reflexivity allows the researcher to connect the process of data collection and data analysis to help ensure rigour in the research. Hence, I made sense of the research process by recounting the processes, problems, choices, and errors that emerged during the fieldwork.

Due to some practical problems I could not manage to gain fieldwork permission from the Education Board. However, finally I gained permission for my fieldwork directly from the school head teachers (see section 4.5). I also had permission to use video in the classroom but I could not do this as it affected teachers' and students' normal practice and the female students did not like it as they thought this could be threat for their reputation (see section 4.8.2). Given the view of flexibility, in this study I had to change working plans and schedule because of the practicalities and problems emerged during the fieldwork.



However, as far as outsider status is concerned, I had been far away from the research context for a lengthy period of time. Firstly, I had been in India for five years to complete my graduation in English literature and post graduation in English Language Teaching (ELT). These studies helped enrich my understanding of applied linguistics and teaching methodology. Secondly, after completing this study, I was engaged as a tertiary English language teacher for about nine years which helped improve my practical understanding of the educational context, in particular Bangladeshi context. Thirdly, I moved to the UK to undertake MRes, leading to my PhD study. During my MRes studies I gained theoretical and practical knowledge of education and research methodologies. These moves from inside towards outside allowed me to reflect on what influences ELT in educational contexts. So by stepping outside the familiar educational context for a lengthy period of time, I have had a sense of 'stranger' that gave me an analytic distance from which I could better analyse what was happening in Bangladeshi schools.

#### **4.3.3 Use of multiple methods**

The use of multiple methods is another basic principle of an ethnographic approach. In this study I used questionnaire survey, observation, interview, group interview, field notes, documents, photographs, and an audio recorder in order to collect data. In the beginning, I conducted a questionnaire survey among 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade English teachers in twenty-seven (27) secondary schools. The aim of this questionnaire survey was to choose two potential schools for observation study and interviews. I observed five English teachers' classes with a semi-open instrument. I then conducted face-to-face interviews with teachers and students, and group interviews with students to clarify what I observed in the lessons. I also took field notes and photographs, and used documents and an audio recorder to collect data that certainly confirms the use of multiple methods in this study (see section 4.8.1).

The use of a multiple method approach is the best way to understand the complexity of the context, to explore the participants' understanding, their difficulties and problems and to gain a deep insight into the issues. Moreover this approach helps to triangulate the various findings to get more accurate and valid data. Golafshani (2003) claims that 'engaging multiple methods, such as observation, interviews and recordings will lead to more valid, reliable and diverse construction of realities' (p. 44). A multiple method approach proved to be the best way to collect data for this study as this project aims to investigate teachers' and learners' problems and difficulties practising a communicative approach in the classroom. In the next section, I will discuss the theoretical assumptions of validity, reliability and generalizability of this study.

#### **4.4 Validity, reliability and generalizability**

The approach of this study is ethnographic, which has been justified in the above sections. The nature of the study is generally qualitative in that I conducted classroom observations, and then interviews to investigate and explore the observed teachers' and students' problems and other difficulties in implementing CLT at secondary level ELT in Bangladesh (see Chapter 5, 6 & 7). Now I will justify the three major issues of this study, e.g. validity, reliability and generalizability. Qualitative research has been criticized by the quantitative researchers as being 'subjective' and lacking in 'scientific rigor'. In response to this criticism, Bird et al argue:

The criticism of quantitative research was that it fails to take account of the very nature of human social life, assuming it to consist of mechanical cause-and-effect relationships: whereas in fact it involves complex processes of interpretation and negotiation that do not have determinate outcomes (1996:15).

There is a strong disagreement between qualitative and quantitative researchers' arguments about the nature of human behaviour and how it can be understood. According to Eisner disagreement of the arguments would be the different perception of the world we see,

‘mainly is the world out there and we see things the way they are or is our view of reality correspondent with reality itself?’ (1993:50). Following an ethnographer’s philosophy, I reject the idea that there is an objective truth ‘out there’ and reject the view that qualitative research is merely an assembly of anecdotes and personal impressions. Emerson states that fieldwork is a ‘deeply personal as well as a scientific project’ (1983, p.184), where the subjectivity and emotional experiences are bound up with interpretative processes. I do however acknowledge the fact that ‘people’s perceptions of the world (and hence the knowledge constructed about it) reflects factors characterizing their particular viewpoints’ (Santos 2004: 83). This is probably because, ‘researchers must put their own selves into the research and interpret what they see or hear’ (Bird et al 1996: 91). This perhaps implies that the researcher himself/herself is a research instrument, which could be viewed as a ‘constraint’ in qualitative research. According to Eisner (1993), in social science research a value-free interpretation is impossible. Being reflective, I recounted the processes, problems, choices, and errors that emerged during the field work. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) argue that reflexivity allows the researcher to connect the process of data collection and data analysis to help ensure rigour in the research. So, instead of denying that my subjectivity could contaminate the data, my approach was to lay it out in the open and make it part of the analytic process. Regarding the perceptions of the world of people related to this study, I recognize that this researcher’s background, his prior knowledge and beliefs about the research setting, the theory he draws on to investigate the phenomena, the methodology he applies to collect data and the analytic tools he adopts can all affect his research.

Reliability is a concern that is often discussed by qualitative researchers. LeCompte and Goetz classified reliability as ‘external reliability’ and ‘internal reliability’ (1982) with the former ‘involving the replicability of the study’ and the latter ‘concerning the likelihood of having different researchers analyse the data in similar ways’ (Santos 2004). Given the dynamic nature of the social world and a research focus that involves teacher and students’

ELT classroom activities, I would not 'expect other researchers in a similar or even the same situation to replicate their findings in the sense of independently coming up with a precisely similar conceptualization' (Schofield 1993: 93). Even in natural science, this kind of replication 'is not always possible' (Hammersley 1994: 9). This does not mean that there is no regulation to follow. To make qualitative research plausible, Seale proposes that 'a more realistic alternative is the provision of a fully reflexive account of procedures and methods, showing to readers in as much detail as possible the lines of inquiry that have led to particular conclusions' (1999: 157). This is the stance that can be related to the concept of internal reliability, which has always been seriously questioned by quantitative researchers. Qualitative research can be a quality one as long as it has boundaries between academic reports and works of literature and people who share the same framework can get the same perspective or the same knowledge (Eisner 1993).

In conjunction with validity and reliability, qualitative researchers are also concerned with generalizability, and 'in the past decade, interest in the issue of generalizability has increased markedly ... in the study of education' (Schofield 1993: 93). The relevant question on generalizability relating to my study would be 'to what extent can the findings be applied to other similar contexts'? Following Schofield's stance (*ibid*), I will now address this question in the following:

First, qualitative research is not to 'generate broadly applicable laws that apply universally' (Schofield 1993: 97). I am keenly aware that it will be problematic to apply the findings from this study to all ELT contexts in Bangladesh by virtue of the country's sheer size and complexity. However, I do agree that 'rejection of the generalizability as a search for broadly applicable laws is not a rejection of the idea that studies in one situation can be used to speak to or to help form a judgment about other situations' (Schofield 1993: 97). This study aims to develop an in-depth understanding of the current situation of ELT at secondary level in Bangladesh. It is appropriate, even desirable, to sacrifice breadth in order to have an in-depth view. I believe that by pointing out the teachers' and learners'

perceived difficulties in implementing communicative language teaching, this study can be referred to by other studies that address similar issues. Another characteristic about generalizability is 'thick description'. Schofield (1993) argues that 'thick descriptions are vital' and he further explains:

Such description of both the site in which studies are conducted and of the site to which one wishes to generalize are crucial in allowing one to search for the similarities and differences between situations (1993:97).

Similar comments on thick descriptions are also made by Seale who explains:

Thick, detailed case study description can give readers a vicarious experience of 'being there' with the researcher, so that they can use their human judgment to assess the likelihood of the same process applying to other settings which they know (1999:118).

This discussion has elaborated the justification of validity, reliability and generalizability of this study, which will be reflected in the following chapters. Now I am going to detail the access of this study in the next section.

## **4.5 Access in the field**

In this section, I am going to tell the story of gaining access for my PhD fieldwork in Secondary Schools in Bangladesh. For access, I first contacted one of my relatives who was ex-secretary of the Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education. I phoned him from the UK to find out about the official procedures and guidelines regarding fieldwork access. He assured me that there would be no trouble to gain permission to conduct research in schools. He also gave me the mobile number of the present board secretary so that I could contact him. I then contacted the secretary. I talked to him several times over the phone from the UK to determine the official procedures of gaining access. Being informed about the application matters and the addressee, I wrote an application to the board chairman that was sent by DHL overnight service. One week later, I phoned the

board secretary to confirm whether he received the letters or not, but he said he hadn't received any letters from my university. Further he suggested me to write two applications, one for him and another for the board chairman. Being so advised, I wrote two applications, one for the board secretary and another for the board chairman which were also sent to the board chairman packed in one envelop by DHL over night service. After sending the letter, I talked to the board secretary just to let him know about the letter and my arrival date in Bangladesh.

He said,

আশা করি, আপনার পাঠানো লেটার আমরা তারাডাড়ি পেয়ে যাব। আমি মনে করি, দুবলা উপজেলায় কাজ করার ক্ষেত্রে কোনো সমস্যা হবে না।  
আপনি যখন এখানে আসবেন, আমরা এর ব্যবস্থা নেব, চিন্তা করবেন না।

Hopefully we will get your letters soon. I think there will be no problem for your fieldwork in Duplah. We will do everything for your fieldwork access once you arrive here, don't worry.

I was thus assured that once I reached their office I would have the formal approval letter to do my PhD field work in all secondary schools (51) in Duplah upa-Zilla, Malah. I went to Malah Education Board office when I arrived in Bangladesh and I met the secretary and introduced myself, and talked about my research and activities. I also wanted to know about the present status of the letter and requested from him official permission to conduct research. He said that he didn't receive any request letter. When I was explaining about the letters, suddenly he wanted to know whether I phoned him from Bangladesh or from the UK. It seemed that he was doubtful about my presence in the UK. I was interested to know the reasons for that. He said that every time he saw Bangladeshi numbers on his phone when I called him from the UK. I told him that we use a calling card for international calls and it is very common for calls to be made this way; due to this instead of a UK number he saw the Bangladeshi number when I called. I was trying to make him understand but it seemed that he was not convinced. However, he asked me to talk to the Education Board Chairman about my research. I went to the chairman and explained everything about me,

my fieldwork and the letters which I had sent twice from the UK. He also said that he didn't receive any letter. He listened to me and asked the head clerk to find the letters. The head clerk said he had indeed received the letters but he was not sure where these letters were. He then went to his office to find the letters, but came back empty handed.

I had thought something like this might happen, so I had brought with me two printed signed copies, one for the chairman, and another for the secretary. When the head clerk returned with no letter, I then gave one copy to the chairman, and he started laughing. He then forwarded this copy to the secretary, and the secretary forwarded this copy to the secondary school inspector and finally he asked the head clerk to take the necessary steps for further action. I then went to the secretary to find out the required process. The secretary said,

আপনাকে পারমিশন দেয়ার জন্য আমাদেরকে মিটিং করতে হবে। মিটিং এ এই ব্যাপারে ডিসিশন নেব, তাতে আমাদের তিন থেকে চার সপ্তাহ সময় লাগবে।

To give you a formal approval for this fieldwork access, we have to call an inter-departmental meeting and then we will take the decision. So you have to wait three to four weeks for this result.

I tried my best to convince the secretary to allow me to start with my research but unfortunately he wasn't interested in my concerns. I also went to the Education Board office several times and explained that my research work schedule was planned within a restricted time frame and it would be helpful if they could grant this approval quickly. Finally I understood that the office staff wanted me to give them some money for their permission, and then I left the office without further comment. In the end I managed to obtain fieldwork permission directly from the head teachers of the schools where I carried out the research. After I realized that gaining access from bureaucrats would be so difficult, I used my personal contacts to gain access to schools. Personal networks often create opportunities to select contexts, make access easy into organizations, and also make research activities easy and smooth (Pegg, 2009:73). Fortunately, I discovered some school

friends who were working in the schools in the area where I wanted to do my research. They were really cooperative and helpful in helping me gain access. They contacted teachers by phone to introduce me. I then went to the schools to conduct research activities.

In the next section, I will detail the ethical assumptions of this study.

## **4.6 Ethics**

Ethical issues are often complex in educational contexts when undertaking research with human participants (Stutchbury and Fox, 2009). To undertake this research study, I was concerned about ethical considerations such as morality, honesty, culture and relationship at various phases of the work: gaining access, collecting data and writing up. I was careful to protect human participants and to avoid risks and complexities (Flinders, 1992).

Prior to carrying out my fieldwork I gained Open University ethical approval (Reference Number: 807) from the Human Participants and Materials Ethics Committee (HPMEC). This study also is also consistent with the British Association for Applied Linguistics' recommendations for good practice in applied linguistics (see [http://www.baal.org.uk/dox/goodpractice\\_full.pdf](http://www.baal.org.uk/dox/goodpractice_full.pdf)).

Because of my status of 'insider with an outsider's view', I constantly considered 'how much it is necessary to tell people' (Cameron 2001:22). Knowing the circumstances in Bangladesh, I wanted to respect the participants' right to know about my research and how the data will be used. But I was also careful about how much information I shared with participants to avoid 'contamination' by 'informing subjects too especially about the research question to be studied' (Silverman 2001/2006:270). I was particularly cautious when answering head teachers' and other teachers' questions about participant teachers' teaching practice to avoid their risks while observing. Doing a PhD for most students in Bangladesh remains merely a dream, particularly in an English speaking country. Bearing this in mind, I tried not to convey the image of being 'the expert'. During data collection, I



always reminded myself and the informants that I am not the one who has 'expert knowledge'; rather I thought of myself as a student learning from them. Silverman argues that 'the role of the social scientist is not to be more knowledgeable than lay people but, instead, to put an analytic method at their disposal' (2001:275). I will now detail the ethical considerations I had during the study which include informed consent, rapport building, the researcher's role, confidentiality, and data management and preservation.

#### **4.6.1 Informed Consent**

As part of my ethical approach, I gained participant consent before starting this research. For the questionnaire survey once I arrived in the schools, I first introduced myself to the head teachers and talked to them about the purpose of my visit and research study. I then showed them the questionnaire and explained the study. Once I gained the head teachers' oral consent. I asked them to introduce me to the teachers who are responsible for the IX and X grade English class. The head teacher then introduced me to the participant teachers in the teachers' room. I talked to the teachers at a time convenient to them in a vacant room in the school premises to explain this study and my research aims and to gain their oral consent for this study. Only once they agreed did I then conduct the survey.

For the observation study, my friends accompanied me to gain access in the schools. They first introduced me to the head teachers and I then introduced myself. They received me cordially, and appreciated my research intentions. I gained the head teachers' written consent. This time, in addition to explaining about my research work, I also handed them a written consent form to read which explained my research activities, risks and benefits of the research, and their right to withdraw participation in research activities at any time. Once they read it, I then asked them to sign two copies of the consent forms; one for me and another for the participant (see Appendix I). All the head teachers I talked to were really cooperative and friendly during my stay in the schools.

I gained consent from the head teachers as gate keepers of the schools; I then gained consent of participant teachers and students that I observed and interviewed. I was very open about my research activities with the participants. Before starting any observation, I talked to the participant teachers to inform them about my research. I also explained my role in the classroom while observing. I told them about the interviews I would conduct with them and their students after the observation. I then gave them the written consent forms to read for better understanding of my research activities, and the risks, benefits and their right to withdraw participation in the research activities. Once they read the details of the research activities mentioned in the consent form, only then did I request the participant teacher to sign two copies of consent forms; one for me and another for the participant. Following this method, I gained signed consent forms from every participant teacher (see Appendix II).

I gained access to students to talk and be interviewed via the head teacher's consent. The head teacher is the chief administrator for the school management and is also held responsible for students' welfare on the school premises. Due to a poor communication system and high illiteracy among many parents, the head teacher acts '*in loco parentis*' for students in Bangladesh. Once I gained the head teachers' and participant teachers' consent I then went to classes along with them to start the observation. The head teacher introduced me to the students. I then introduced myself and explained my research activities, such as observations, interviews, and group interviews, and talked about the risks and benefits, their right to withdraw participation and my stay in their school and requested their oral consent to stay in their class to observe the classroom activities and for interviews once I finished observations. They welcomed me, and only then did I start observations. Following this technique I gained access for observation of participant teachers' ELT classes.

I explained my research activities and requested their consent at every stage of working with students and teachers. I explained to the participant teachers the interview process and

sought permission to use the audio recorder. I also discussed the risks and benefits of the study, the confidentiality of their interview data and the possibility to withdraw their participation. I then requested their oral consent to conduct the interview. Once I gained participant teachers' oral consent for an interview I started to ask about the classroom activities I had observed. I followed the same method to conduct both personal interviews and group interviews with students.

In reporting, I anonymised participants' names to maintain confidentiality. I was always cautious of my data management and preservation. All digital data were preserved securely in password-protected folders. Printed data are stored in lockers. Raw data could be destroyed or preserved after completing my PhD research considering its suitability for further research.

#### **4.6.2 Rapport building**

Good relations with participants and knowledge of their culture such as faith, beliefs, festival and social activities and being familiar with them in the context is one of the basic principles of collecting rich data in qualitative research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Given that I was born and brought up, and educated in Bangladesh, I am very familiar with Bangladeshi cultural factors. I made use of every single opportunity to build a good relationship with the participants. I gave them assurance that I could be trusted to not do them harm. In western countries research in education and linguistics is relatively common, but conducting research in the Bangladesh secondary level education context was challenging, as most people have limited knowledge and understanding about how research works. In Bangladeshi culture, people tend to be afraid or suspicious of talking with newcomers, recording talks and also the signing of documents; nevertheless they may be willing to give information orally. 'Silence' has cultural values in Bangladesh. There is an idiom in Bangla, 'কথা কম ভুল কম' which literally means 'less talk, less mistakes'. People believe that if they talk more they will make more mistakes. There is also another proverb,

‘ঘরের কথা পরকে বলতে নেই’ which literally means ‘do not disclose family matters with others’.

These type of beliefs and values also reveal Bangladeshi cultural sensitivities. Considering the context, these notions can explain why people, when they have problems, tend to hide them away or tackle them on their own regardless of external conditions. However, people share ideas and exchange views if they find someone trustworthy and reliable. Classroom observation is always a sensitive issue because Bangladeshi teachers are viewed as the ‘embodiment of knowledge’ and there is a view that they are not supposed to make mistakes while ‘lecturing’. So for the participants it could be intimidating to be observed and nobody would willingly be interested to have their practice criticised. I therefore had to gain their trust that I would not be exposing any bad practice.

Keeping in mind the nature of the ethnographic thrust of this research study, I built a good relationship with the participants to gain a membership status into their school community. I used to talk to the head teachers and other teachers in their free time. I would sit in the teachers’ room and had informal talks on issues such as our personal life, professional life, daily life, newspaper reports, daily essential commodities etc. We also had food and tea during the leisure period. Sometimes I also had tea and breakfast with participant teachers in the restaurants near the schools. I also passed time with participant teachers after school and talked about our personal life and professional life and ELT matters. I treated them with traditional Bangladeshi foods like zilapi (জিলাপি), singara (সিংগারা) and puri (পুри). They also treated me. I enjoyed the cultural and sports programme rehearsal and final events in the schools and received an invitation letter to be present at the students’ final cultural and sports programme. The head teacher asked me to play the role of judge for some events with other teachers which I did and very much enjoyed. The head teacher asked me to take some photographs of events for their school. Students also asked me to take photos when they performed. Finally there was a race event for the guests. I was really excited to participate but I could not do it because of my poor health. I also received an invitation to attend the S.S.C examinees’ welfare programme, locally called, dua mahfil (দোয়া মাহফিল).

This is a traditional event in Bangladesh secondary schools. Generally students organize this event themselves, with the help of teachers, to say good bye to their senior students and to wish them success in the S.S.C examinations. Students bear all the expenses for this event. Generally, invited guests, teachers and students speak at this event. Fortunately I too had an opportunity to speak which also helped to build a good rapport with participants in the schools.

It was S.S.C examination time when I conducted the fieldwork. Sometimes I would meet the participant teachers in the examination centre school after their exam duty. We had light food and tea at a near by restaurant and had an informal conversation about the examination. I found the teachers cordial, cooperative and friendly towards me and my research. My participation in various activities in the school and talk with teachers at different times in the schools and outside the schools helped to establish a close relationship.

I used to go to schools about an hour before classes started. I noticed that many students came early to school for private tuition. They usually passed time in the school corridor and in the school ground before they started. I made use of this opportunity to talk with them about our daily life, school life and family life. I found them curious, friendly and cooperative. Sometimes I played cricket with students in the school ground. I also attended students' assembly classes. In addition, sometimes I treated them with zilabi (জিলাপি), singara (সিংগারা) and purui (পুৰী) before starting the interviews. These activities and interactions with students helped to gain their trust and confidence, which ultimately helped create an easy and comfortable setting for the interviews.

Finally, I cannot help but share a wonderful fieldwork experience. One day, I came to know that Grade 10 students at one of the schools were planning a self-funded study tour for the first time. The school authority could not give students financial support due to their limited capacity. The students finalised the plan and programme with the help of their head teacher and assistant head teacher. They invited me to join this programme. I could not but

accept their invitation as they cordially accepted my invitation for the research work. I came to learn that some students could not join this programme due to their financial problems. I felt very bad when I got this information and I then talked to the head teacher to offer my contribution on their behalf. The head teacher accepted my offer cordially and thanked me. It was really a wonderful feeling. This little contribution made the students and teachers happy and afterwards they seemed to accept me as a close confidant. But unfortunately, due to rough weather they postponed the programme and I could not join them and finished my research and left the school before this programme happened. Due in part to the close personal relationship, I found the head teachers, teachers and students welcoming, interested and supportive of my research.

In the above, I have explained the theoretical assumptions of my research approach, the issues of validity, reliability and generalizability, and issues of access and ethics in this study. In the next section, I will present the setting where I undertook this study.

## **4.7 The setting: schools and participants**

This section describes the setting of my research study. In particular, it will present school location, infrastructure of observed schools and a description of participant teachers and students.

### **4.7.1 School location**

I conducted the study in two mixed high schools set up for boys and girls in Duplah upazilla under Malahi district. They are located in a rural area in the northern part of Malahi district. Malahi is about 120 miles a way from the capital city but it takes 8-10 hours to reach this location by bus due to poor transport system. These schools provide education for science, arts and commerce students.

## 4.7.2 School infrastructure

This section describes the school building, environment, students, teachers and staff in the school under the following headings: PRN High School and AKZ High School.

### 4.7.2.1 PRN High School

PRN secondary high school was established in 1970. A two storied building and two tin-shed houses are being used for academic and administrative work.



Figure 4.1: PRN High School

There is a small playground in front of the school. It is located just beside a district-connecting road but it has a boundary wall to protect it from outsider access. The location of the school and the communication system seem good for teachers and students. Due to its location, various vehicles for example, rickshaw, auto-rickshaw and bus are available for communication. There is a market near the school. During the leisure period, teachers and students can buy food and necessary materials from the market.

There is no library or science laboratory in this school. The teachers sit in a small common room which seems dark, poorly equipped, and disorganized. The classroom is not spacious and students' seating is insufficient. The blackboard is not in good condition. The classroom also lacks enough teaching aids but there is enough light and air. Among these students, 161 and 243 students were enrolled in grade IX and X respectively and these students were distributed in three different groups: arts, (A) science (B) and commerce (C) in each grade (See Table 4.1). Fifteen full-time and five part-time teachers are engaged to teach these students, among them five are female. Apart from this, six office staff are employed to support academic and administrative work.



In the 2011 academic year, 1190 students were enrolled in different grades in this school.

**Table 4.1: Number of students in PRN High School - 2011**

Grade	Male Ss	Female Ss	Total	Sections
VI	133	134	267	A, B, & C
VII	131	136	267	A, B, & C
VIII	117	135	252	A, B, & C
IX	71	90	161	A, B, & C
X	134	109	243	A, B, & C

Total=1190 (Source: School register 2011)

**4.7.2.2 AKZ High School**

AKZ secondary high school was established in 1958. A two-storied building and a tin-shed house are used for academic and administrative purposes. There is a mini play ground in front of the school.



**Figure 4.2: AKZ High School**

Across the school ground there is access to the primary school and the community. The school is located just beside a village road and people can see classroom activities through the windows. There is no boundary wall to protect outsiders’ access to the school. This is located in typical rural area in Bangladesh. Unlike PRN High School, the location of the school and the communication system seem very poor for teachers and students.

Like PRN High School, there is no library or science laboratory in this school. The teachers sit in a small common room which seems dark, poorly equipped, unclean, and disorganized. The classroom seems spacious and has enough seats for students. But the classroom is dark and seems to lack adequate materials for teaching and learning. Unlike, PRN High School there are many posters and pictures of famous people on the classroom



wall. Among these students 62 students were enrolled in grade IX and X respectively and these students were distributed in sections according to different groups: arts, science and commerce (see Table 4.2). Six full-time and four part-time teachers are engaged to teach these students. Apart from this, four office staff are also employed to support academic and administrative work.

In the 2011 academic year, four hundred and thirty eight students were enrolled in different grades in this school.

**Table 4.2: Number of students in AKZ high school-2011**

Grade	Male Ss	Female Ss	Total	Sections
VI	60	40	100	A & B
VII	56	44	100	A & B
VIII	63	51	114	A & B
IX	38	34	72	Single section
X	29	33	62	Single section

Total=438 (Source: School register

2011)

### 4.7.3 Participants of the study

This section presents the participants’ information under the headings of teachers and students. I observed five teachers’ ELT classes during my stay in the schools. These teachers are responsible for teaching English for Today in grade IX and X in these two schools. Apart from this, they also teach other subjects (For detailed profiles of those teachers, see Section 5.3).

#### 4.7.3.1 Teachers

I explain participant teachers’ background information which includes teachers’ names; the school they are teaching at, their class load per week, teaching experience, qualification gained, training received, subject taught beyond English, and their professional position in the school. Shafiq, an assistant teacher at PRN High School has been teaching for twenty-

eight (28) years. He completed a B.A and B.Ed qualification and additionally, received CPD and TQI-SEP training. He taught 28 hours in a week. As an assistant teacher, Kader has been teaching in PRN High School for 13 years. He achieved a B.A, M.A. and BEd degree. He only attained Continuous Professional development (CPD) training. Belal also has been teaching in PRN High School for 21 years. He completed a B.A degree and received only CPD training. Alom, acting head teacher at AKZ High School has been teaching for 22 years. He obtained several certificates such as, CPD, TQI-SEP, and ELTIP. In addition to teaching English, he taught Bangla. Noyon has been teaching in AKZ High School for three years. He completed a B.S.S and M.S.S.S degree but received no training. He taught 29 hours in a week (see Table 4.3).

**Table 4.3: Participant teachers' background information**

No	Teacher name	School name	Class load P/W	Teaching experience	Qualification	Training received	Other subjects taught	Position held
I	Shafiq	PRN	28	28 years	B.A and B.Ed	CPD and TQI-SEP.	Social science	Assistant teacher
II	Kader	PRN	28	13 years	B.A, M.A and B.Ed	CPD	Social science	Assistant teacher
III	Belal	PRN	28	21 years	B.A.	CPD	Geography	Assistant teacher
IV	Alom	AKZ	19	22 years	B.A.	CPD, TQI-SEP, and ELTIP	Bengali	Acting Head Teacher
V	Noyon	AKZ	29	03 years	B.S.S & M.S.S.S	No training	History and Bengali	Assistant teacher

(Source: School register 2011)

### 4.7.3.2 Students

The students I observed and interviewed all belong to grade IX and X in different groups: arts, science and commerce. In Bangladesh when students are promoted to Grade IX, they are offered these major subjects to study. They were all aged between 14-15. In PRN High

School there were three sections for each Grade: A, B and C for arts, science and commerce group students respectively. There were four hundred and forty (440) students in Grade IX and X, among those one hundred and ninety nine (199) were female. I interviewed one hundred (100) students in PRN High School. There were only one section in Grade IX and X for arts, science and commerce group students in AKZ High School. The total number of students was one hundred and twenty four (124), among those fifty seven (57) were female. I interviewed sixty six (66) students. The total number of students that I interviewed was one hundred and sixty six in both schools (see Table 4.4).

**Table 4.4: Participant students**

School name	Grade	Section	Total Ss	Male	Female
PRN	IX	A(Arts)	27	9	18
		B(Science)	38	14	24
		C(Commerce)	96	48	48
PRN	X	A(Arts)	62	20	42
		B(Science)	53	35	18
		C(Commerce)	128	79	49
AKZ	IX	A (Arts, Science and Commerce)	62	38	24
AKZ	X	A (Arts, Science and Commerce)	62	29	33

(Source: School register 2011)

In this section, I have described the schools and participants. In the next section I will detail what I did in the field.

### 4.8 Methods used in this study

This study not only looks into teachers’ training and knowledge, and teachers’ and students’ socio-economic status but also the use of English, the use of Bangla, the use of materials and techniques, and the use of techniques for testing and assessment in the classroom in order to find out teachers’ and learners’ perceived difficulties practicing CLT in the English classroom. To carry out this research I initially conducted a questionnaire survey to select potential schools for observation.

I then observed ELT classes and interviewed teachers and students in these schools. Figure 4.3 presents my data collection approach. In the following I will detail the data collection methods I applied in this study.

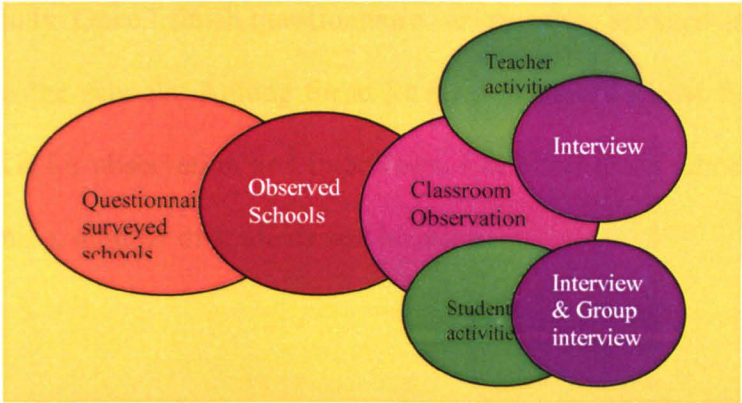


Figure 4.3: Data collection approach in this study

4.8.1 Questionnaire survey

I began this study by conducting a questionnaire survey among 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade English teachers in twenty-seven (27) secondary schools in Duplah upazilla. The purpose of this questionnaire survey was to choose potential schools for follow-up observation and interviews. I distributed the questionnaire to sixty-one (61) teachers in twenty-seven (27) schools in Duplah upazilla. Thirty-four (34) teachers responded in fourteen (14) schools. The questionnaire was in English and it was designed with both open-ended and multiple choice questions which asked about the background information of teachers and schools and teachers’ ideas and opinion on CLT. Some open questions were also designed to explore the problems of practising CLT in the English classroom and the teachers’ knowledge of CLT (see Appendix III). The questionnaire was in English but I explained it to the participants’ teachers in Bangla following their queries. The choice of using English in the questionnaire was one of the techniques to choose the schools for observation and interview.

I spent two months in the field for this part of study. My plan was to visit one school and sometimes two schools in a day as per location and distance. I planned to distribute the questionnaire among the teachers and to collect it on the same day. But this plan did not always work. In most cases I had to contact teachers in person or via phone to collect the questionnaire. I conducted this survey study in November-December 2010 and during this

time which is why there was a low response rate. Therefore, I faced some problems and difficulties in conducting this study. Once I finish questionnaire survey I then selected and started the observation study in the schools. Among these fourteen schools I chose two potential schools: PRN and AKZ for observation and interviews. I selected these schools based teacher qualification, training, number of students and location.

#### **4.8.2 Observation**

Classroom observation plays an important role in understanding better the difficulties and problems of classroom teaching and the pedagogical inconsistency in classroom practice (Lightbown and Spada 1999). I used observation to see how teachers and students behaved in the classroom, how CLT techniques and materials were used and how language was used. Moreover, observation informed the interviews that I conducted later on. I undertook observation and interviews among Grade IX and X English teachers who were responsible for teaching the national textbook 'English For Today' and students in PRN and AKZ High Schools. I collected the class timetable from the head teacher to find out participant teachers' schedules and then I talked to them to finalise my observation plan. I planned to observe four teachers in the PRN High School and two teachers in AKZ High School. But this plan did not work at PRN High School as two of them attended a training programme. I planned to observe two ELT classes in one working day and to conduct one group and three individual interviews with students and a teacher interview following an observation. But after some days I had to reorganise my working plan in both schools because of fewer classes (see Section 7.2.1).

I started the observation study in January 2011 and finished in March 2011. When observing I always went to the classroom before the teachers arrived. I sat on the back bench with the check-list. There were students around me and at the beginning they looked at what I was doing, but gradually they became familiar with the situation and they started to ignore me. Although I had permission to use video recording in the classroom and I

recorded some classes, I had to stop using the video recorder in the classroom for two reasons. First, I found it affected teachers' and students' normal practices. Second, female students did not like it, as they thought it could be harmful for their reputation and were very uncomfortable. Subsequently I fully relied on my own observations and on the observation checklist (see Section 5.4.1).

After observing the lesson, I took photographs of the classroom, textbook, students' work, teachers' board work and any posters, which I used when interpreting the data. I took note of what I was not sure of and of anything that seemed unusual in order to ask the teacher a after the lesson and in the interviews.

### **4.8.3 Interview**

This section details the process and instruments for conducting interviews. The interview is a 'basic method of data gathering' and is useful 'to obtain a rich, in-depth experimental account of an event or episode in the life of the respondent' (Fontana and Frey 2005:698). In in-depth interviews, participants have the opportunity to clarify their answers, to explain their opinions and experiences, and to cite instances (Rubin and Rubin, 2005).

Once I finished the observations I organised semi-structured interviews with teachers and students with the help of the head teacher and assistant head teacher. They took place in a vacant room on the school premises in two phases: during school and after school time. I selected students for interviews in the presence of an assistant head teacher and class teacher. I asked the students to raise their hands if they were interested to take part in the interview. Among these students I chose a random sample of students for interviews. Before starting the interview, I checked the audio recorder to ensure that the device was working, batteries were charged and there was enough space in the memory. I obtained informed verbal consent from the participants (see Section 4.6.1). When I started recording, first I stated the date, name

of school and name of participants so that this could be matched to the observation. I conducted the interview mainly in Bangla. Each student interview lasted about 20 minutes and each teacher interview about 30 minutes and was audio-recorded for further data processing.

The purpose of these semi-structured interviews was mainly to aid the interpretation of observations. The questions also gave insight into the teachers' view of their role, their use of techniques and materials, their use of English and perceptions of their students' English learning. I asked questions such as 'what lesson from the textbook did you just cover'? 'What did you want your students to learn in this lesson'? 'Do you think they learned it'? 'How do you know'? (see Appendix V).

During students' interviews, questions were asked to reveal their opinions regarding classroom activities, their use of techniques, materials, and language, and their role in the classroom, e.g. I asked them questions like

'Do you like English class'? 'Why do you like/dislike it'? 'Do you often speak in your English class'? 'How do you feel about it'? 'What did you learn from this lesson today'? 'Was the class that I just saw a typical lesson from your teacher'? (see Appendix VI). Before starting, we had an informal conversation to make the atmosphere friendly and comfortable. I asked questions such as 'how are you'? 'How do you come to school'? 'What is your favourite game'? 'Where do you live'?

(Translated into English)

In addition, I used the following techniques in teacher and students interviews to encourage the participants to talk more on a subject.

I repeated the last word or phrase spoken by the interviewee, to prompt for further information giving, e.g.:

T: oh yes, they were so excited.

R: Excited?

T: Yes, really. One lesson, the students...

I paraphrased and reflected back to check understanding: e.g.:

R: So, it sounds to me like you are saying ... ..is that right?

I clarified if the interviewee said things that appeared to contradict or conflict with earlier statements and raised this for further discussion;

R: Can I just check? Earlier in the interview, I think you said...but now it sounds like you are saying ...

I summarised key points the interviewee had made; to check understanding and completeness, which often prompted interviewee to either correct or extend my summary.

But I was careful not to lead the teacher, e.g.:

I: So, have I got this right: when you teach English in classroom you face problems like...

I was empathetic to interviewee, verbal and non-verbal, e.g.:

I: How did that make you feel, now?

(Translated into English)

After the interview I thanked the teachers and students for their time. I also thanked the head teacher and office staff for their support. The following table presents the data for teacher and student interviews.

Table 4.5: Interview data set

Type of interview	Total number of interviews	Approximate duration of interviews (minutes)
Teacher interview	47	47x30=1410
Student individual interview	76	76x20=1520
Students group interview	15	15x55=825
	Total=138	Total=3755

4.8.4. Group interview

The objectives of the group interview were the same as the individual student interviews. However, this time, I collected information in a group. I applied this method to ensure a group of students' participation in the discussion and to collect their ideas and opinions on



the questions. Krueger and Casey (2000) claim that in a permissive environment, same age group and same experience informants can express their opinions openly. Group interview also is an opportunity for the participants to talk and discuss the issues and to share their ideas and experiences (Bloor et al. 2001).

Like the student individual interview, I applied the same process and instrument. I selected a sample of six students for each group interview. I also obtained students’ verbal consent before conducting this interview (see Section 4.6.1). In addition, I explained to the students in Bangla what to do and how to do this discussion in the group. Each group interview lasted about 55 minutes. The number and total duration of group interviews is given in Table 4.5.

**4.8.5 Documents**

During my fieldwork, I got access to documents which are publicly available such as the English syllabus and textbook used by teachers and students. In addition, I made of use of internal school documents such as school registers, students’ attendance record books, teachers’ work plans, and class routines. I also used teachers’ board work and students’ writing activities as evidence while talking to them. Apart from this, I wrote field notes of my classroom observation, visit and stay in the schools and captured photographs of the school and classroom activities. I also observed extra curricular activities which contributed to my general understanding of the research environment but do not feature in my analysis. The following figure is a summary of the data collected for this study.

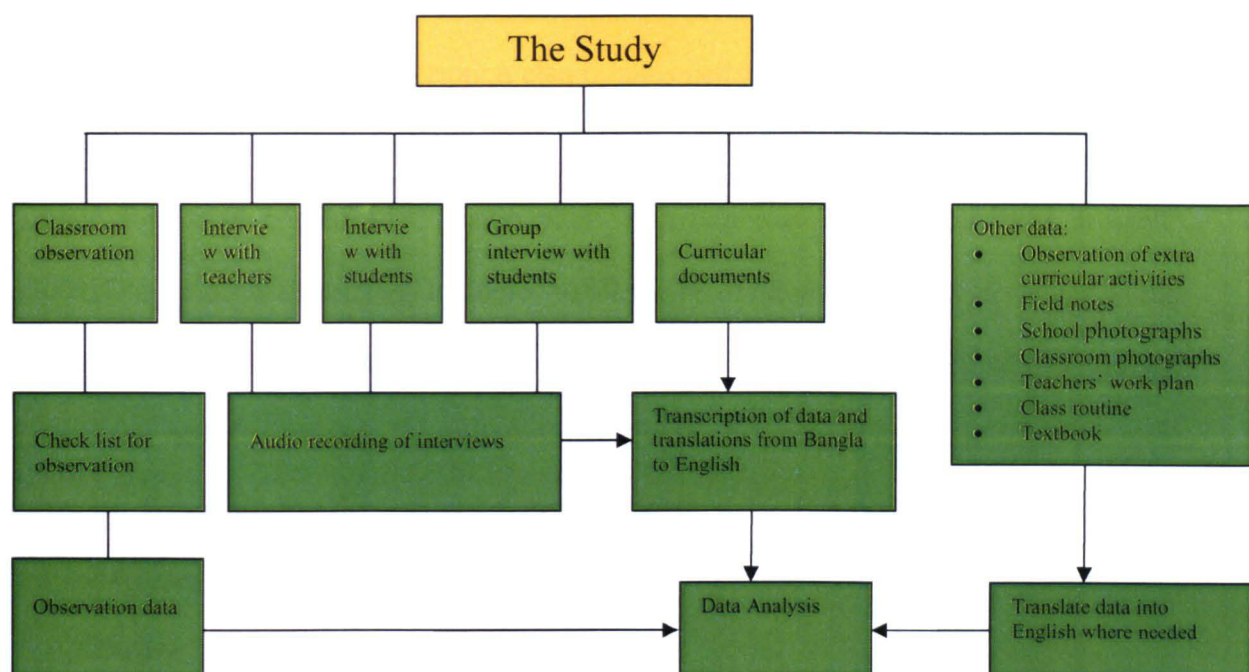


Figure 4.4: Summary of data collected for this study

## 4.9 Data transcription and analysis

This section describes the techniques and methods of data transcription and analysis. First I will explain the transcription theory and conventions I used and will illustrate this with an example. I will then discuss the theoretical framework used for data analysis. Finally I will present the theoretical model framework I applied in this study.

### 4.9.1 Data transcription

Many scholars (e.g. Cook 1990, Ochs 1999) argue that transcriptions are value-laden and reflect the transcribers' interests and assumptions. Swann further explains this point: 'Transcription necessarily corresponds to a researcher's interests and what they see as the analytical potential of their data, as well as their wider beliefs and values' (2010), which are informed by an underlying philosophy. Clearly, the researcher's interests, beliefs, and values play an important part in decisions made about transcription. In addition to researcher's beliefs and values, the selection and transcription of data is also affected by other factors, including the goal of research.

Ochs puts it as follows: ‘transcription is a selective process reflecting theoretical goals and definitions’ (1999: 168). Transcription also implies certain analytical decisions and in fact it is argued that there is no straightforward cut-off point between transcription and analysis. Taylor, for instance, contends ‘Transcription is an important aspect of analysis in itself’ (2001:57). Before transcribing, I listened to all the recordings of the interviews and group interviews several times. Given the view of my research goals, I transcribed the relevant interviews, and also translated them into English as the majority of data is in Bangla. I used software ExpressScribe to transcribe my interview data. During the transcription, the following conventions were adopted:

**Table 4.6: Transcription conventions**

Notation	Meaning
R	Researcher
T	Teacher
S	Student (Ss-more than one student)
Sx (number)	Student x
Normal	Utterances originally in Bangla
Underlined	Utterances in English
Time New Roman font	Speech translated from Bangla to English
(xx)	Unintelligible or inaudible speech
--	Silence from participant (s)when response expected
(( ))	Comments or description of non-verbal behavior
[n]	A pause n = number of seconds
?	A question mark indicates a rising inflection. It does not necessarily indicate a question.

An example of original transcription with English translation is given below:

R How long have you been working as an English teacher?

ডিচার ১৩ বছর ।

T 13 years

গবেষক একজন English teacher হিসেবে আপনার অলুভতি কি ?

R How do you feel as an English teacher?

টিচার প্রায় টা ছোট কিন্তু ব্যাপকতা অনেক। এর জন্য অনেক সময় দরকার। actually পড়িয়ে কোন তৃপ্তি নাই।

T It's a small question, but big in sense. I need time to tell about this. Actually I don't get self-satisfaction.

গবেষক কারণ কি ?

R Why?

টিচার আমি ছেলে মেয়েদেরকে যা শিখাতে চাই শিখাতে পারিনি। এদের basic English খুব-ই দুর্বল। এরা দশম শ্রেণীর ছাত্র ছাত্রী অধিকাংশ ই

ইংরেজী বুঝে না। যেমন, আমি যদি জিজ্ঞাসা করি what is your father? তারা বলতে পারে না। কিন্তু যদি বলি তোমার বাবা কি

করেন? তারা বলতে পারে।

T I could not teach my students what I wanted to teach them in a class. Their basic English is very poor. They are X grade students. But many students can not understand English. For example, if I ask students what does your father do ? They can't say, but if I ask in Bangla. They can answer it.

## 4.9.2 Data analysis

Keeping in view my research objectives, I collected both qualitative and quantitative data; however, most of the data were qualitative, interview data. Hammersley and Atkinson contend that 'the analysis of data involves interpretation of the meanings, functions, and consequences of human actions and institutional practices, and how these are implicated in local, and perhaps also wider contexts. What are produced, for the most part, are verbal descriptions, and theories: quantification and statistical analysis play a subordinate role at most' (2007:3).

Given this view, I made use of both approaches - verbal descriptions as well as quantifications of data. I used pie charts for some statistical analysis of classroom observation data in chapter 5. I used thematic analysis to analyse the interview and group interview data. Thematic analysis is a systematic and uniform technique for categorizing

qualitative data (Boyatzis, 1998:4). In this process themes emerge from a close scrutiny of the collected data and themes are developed inductively (Aronson, 1994; Barun & Clarke, 2006).

Like most qualitative research, the analysis of data starts even before the data is collected. In my case, the analysis permeated the three years of my study. Braun and Clarke argue that, 'The process starts when the analyst begins to notice, and look for, patterns of meaning and issues of potential interest in the data - this may be during data collection' (2006: 86). I followed a step -by- step process to analyze my data (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Patton, 1990). First, I familiarized myself with the data set- the observation data, audio recordings, original transcripts and translated data. I then highlighted the relevant excerpt to generate initial themes or patterns, analytic codes, and major themes. Aronson claims that 'themes are identified by bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which often are meaningless when viewed alone' (Leininger, 1985:60 quoted by Aronson). While transcribing the data I identified themes of the study but the final direction was only confirmed once all the data had been transcribed. Following Hammersley and Atkinson (1983:178), I engaged in 'a careful reading of the data [...] in order to gain a thorough familiarity with it'. This proved to be an important step in helping me identify patterns and themes as well as establishing the connections between them. While analyzing, I would go back and forth, in a circular study to make sense of the data, and also went beyond data to generate ideas to make clear sense within the data (see Figure 4.5). According to Hammersley and Atkinson the data analysis process:

ought to involve an iterative process in which ideas are used to make sense of data, and data are used to change our ideas. In other words, there should be movement back and forth between ideas and data. So, analysis is not just a matter of managing and manipulating data. We must be prepared to go beyond the data to develop ideas that will illuminate them, and this will allow us to link our ideas with those of

others; and we must then bring those ideas back to test their fit with further data, and so on (2007: 159).

Given the aim of this study, two major themes emerged as significant and influential from teachers’ and students’ perspectives, pedagogical difficulties, and environmental and personal difficulties. I analyze these two major themes in Chapters 6 and 7. Considering that the amount of data is manageable, throughout data analysis, I have engaged in manual analysis. The benefit of a manual approach is that by manipulating the data intensively and extensively, I have acquired complete familiarity with the data at both a general and specific level. An example of data generation is given in Table 4.7 below:

**Table 4.7: Techniques of data analysis**

Original data (English Translation)	Initial themes/ patterns	Analytic codes	Major themes
<p>R: How long have you been working as an English teacher?</p> <p>T: 13 years</p> <p>R: How do feel now?</p> <p>T: It’s a small question, but big in sense. I need time to tell about this. Actually i don’t get self-satisfaction as</p> <p>R: So you are not satisfied at your present position?</p> <p>T: Yes.</p> <p>R: Why are you not satisfied?</p> <p>T: I could not teach students what I wanted to teach in a class. Their basic English is very poor. They can’t read English. They are X grade students.but many students can not understand simple English, for example, if I ask [a student] what is your father ? He can’t say, but if I ask in Bangla. He can answer it.</p>	<p>Students can’t read</p> <p>Student can’t understand</p>	<p>Students’ poor English skills</p>	<p>Pedagogical difficulties</p>



Figure 4.5 provides a picture of the methodological framework for interview data analysis:

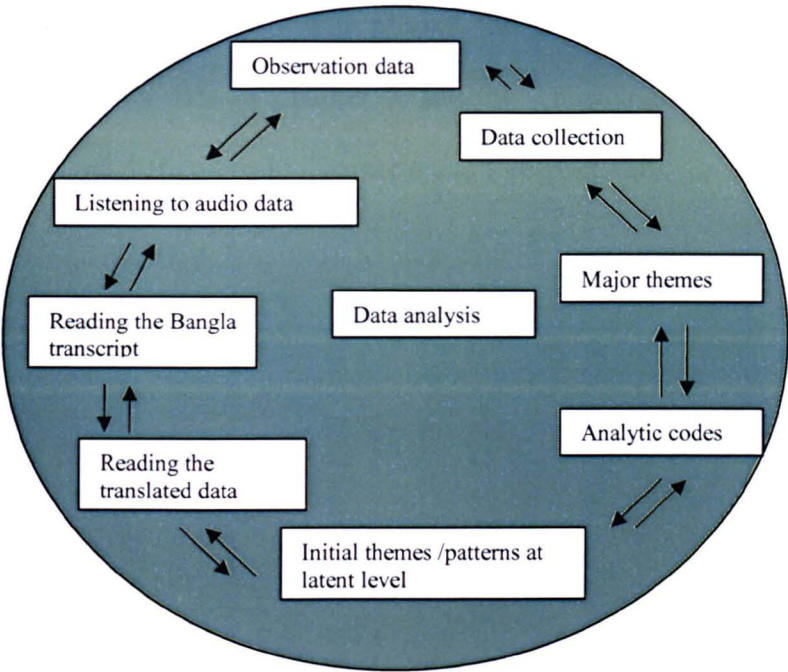


Figure 4.5: Methodological frameworks for data analysis

The above figure shows that my interview data analysis process was recursive in nature and started with data collection. I also made use of observation data as a supplement to interview data. I used to listen to audio data and transcribe them into Bangla. I then translated the original data into English. I read translated data several times to become familiar with it and to identify initial themes. I also used to read original data when needed. This technique informed the analytical codes and the major themes.

### 4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I have explained the methodology applied in this study. I have briefly described the origin of the general ethnographical approach used and a justification has also been made for this. Terms such as ‘intermittent mode’, and ‘insider vs outsider’ have been detailed considering my own experience and the pattern of data collection. Validity, reliability, and generalizability related to this qualitative research were illustrated. Access and ethical considerations undertaken for this study have been discussed. The research context and the participants of the study were described. The overall data set has also been presented. The theoretical assumptions for data selection and conventions for transcription

have been explained. A framework for data analysis has also been presented. In the following chapters, I will present the data analysis, firstly the analysis of classroom observation data in Chapter 5, and then, pedagogical difficulties and environmental and personal difficulties in Chapter 6 and 7 respectively.



## **Chapter 5: Classroom observation data and analysis**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents and analyses the data from the classroom. It first presents the factors that informed observation and a summary of observations. It then provides profiles of the individual teacher including their background, education, training, and teaching experience. This is followed by a brief description of the ELT classes observed. The analysis of the observations is categorised by beginning, middle and ending activities in the lessons observed. This chapter also demonstrates the proportion of communicative activities, teacher talk vs. student talk time and use of English vs. Bangla in classroom practice.

### **5.2 Aspects of classroom observation**

The focus of my observation was the ELT activities that teacher and students engaged in during a lesson and how they engaged in them. The observation also took account of the amount of teacher vs. student talking time, teachers' and students' use of the mother tongue (Bangla) vs. the target language (English), the classroom environment and the relationship between teachers and students.

Apart from what I experienced during the classroom observation, my analysis was informed by what I saw around the school and what I know about Bangladesh and ELT in Bangladesh. My brief interviews with teachers and students after each classroom observation played a vital role in informing an understanding about what I saw in the ELT classrooms and around the schools, e.g. teaching methods and techniques, the classroom situation, the school environment, students' activities and their opinions of them, their likes and dislikes, and the teacher-student relationship. As such, the classroom observations were guided by the factors shown in Figure 1 below:

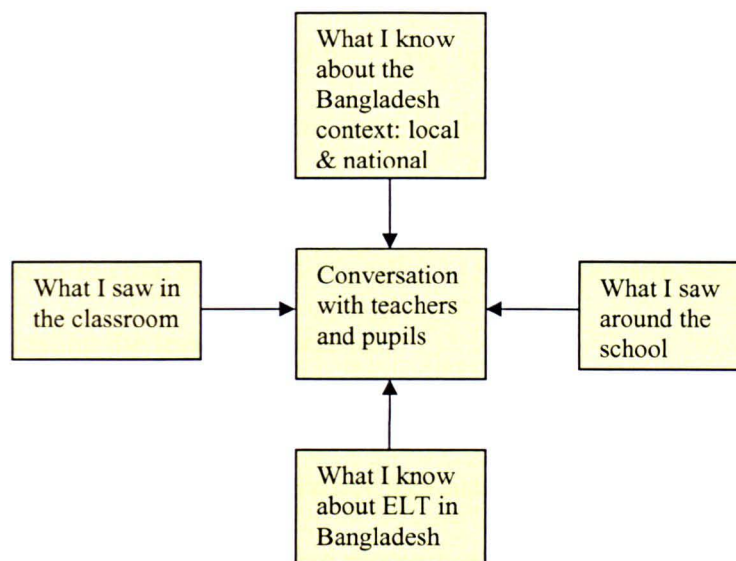


Figure 5.1: Aspects of Classroom Observation

## 5.3 Individual teacher’s profile

This section presents background information about the individual teachers whose classes I observed, and provides a brief sketch of their practices in the classroom.

### 5.3 1 Teacher 1: Alom

Alom is the acting head teacher in AKZ high school. He completed a B.A. in philosophy but did not receive a B.Ed qualification. He received teacher training through the English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP) as well as other CPD (Continuous Professional Development) training. He has been working as an English teacher for 25 years. He is assigned to 19 classes in a week but he cannot manage to take these classes because of his official work, as the following shows.

Alom generally arrived late to class and left early, and only dismissively greeted students with ‘Good morning’. Most of the time, he showed little preparation for the lesson. He usually asked students to borrow a textbook for the class. Moreover, he was not fastidious about the lesson and its content. For example, he usually asked students where he finished the last class. His lesson instructions were generally not clear to students in the class, for

example he provided no objectives for the lesson, no guidance for the activities and the ways of doing these activities. He usually did not 'wrap up' the lesson; he simply finished when time was up and did not talk about what they would do in the next class. The three stages of doing an activity pre stage, while stage and post-stage - was not obvious in his practice. This suggested to me that he made little effort in lesson planning, implementing a plan and finally in evaluating the lessons in practice.

In the lessons I observed, it appeared that Alom talked for a majority of the time in class. I hardly observed him creating interactive activities like pair work, group work, simulation or role-play. He mainly practised grammar and memorization activities. He spent most of the time reading out the text in English and translating into Bangla, asking students to do the same, writing questions on the blackboard, and asking students to write answers to these questions. He generally assessed students' understanding in the lesson by asking questions, but he involved only the motivated students in this process. Alom tried a little to engage the whole class in doing activities; however, he only involved the interested students. This suggested that he lacked knowledge of general classroom pedagogical techniques, e.g. what to teach in the lesson, how to do it and finally how to assess its success.

It came into view that Alom used more Bangla than English in the class. But he used more English than other teachers despite the fact that he did not seem confident in using it. The students seemed not to understand when he spoke English, but this did not result in him trying to increase their understanding. This suggested that such English use was not a regular feature of his classes, and perhaps he was trying to use more English as he was being observed. During the observation, he put a little effort into trying new activities and techniques that could make the whole class active and engaging the inactive students in class. He only used the textbook and blackboard as teaching materials. My impression on Alom's practices was that he employed mainly traditional teaching methods - hardly a communicative approach.

### **5.3 2 Teacher 2: Belal**

Belal, an assistant teacher at PRN high school, has been teaching for 21 years, and has been teaching English for 10 years. He completed a B.A degree in Islamic studies, but did not pursue any qualification or degree in English literature or ELT. Previously he taught history and geography. Apart from his teaching job, he is busy with a personal business, social activities and school management activities.

Belal generally could not manage to tend to his regular classes because of his other activities. He usually entered the class late and left the class before the class time was finished. When he entered the class, most of the time he asked students, 'how are you'? in Bangla and hardly said 'Good morning' in English. He generally did not discuss the objectives of the lessons and did not review the activities practised in the lesson. In the classes that I observed, he gave a few clear instructions to students for doing activities. He usually used the 'guidebook', a teacher's book in which answers are provided for classroom practice. The lessons showed no sign of having a beginning, main and ending activities. This suggested that most of the time he wrote no plans for his lessons. It seemed that he talked most of the lesson time although a few opportunities were created for students to talk. He spent a lot of class time drawing tables on the blackboard and reading out passages from the textbook, providing the Bangla translation, or asking students to do the same. While these activities have some pedagogic potential, they did not seem to have set purposes. Class time was mostly spent on memorization and drilling. He generally asked closed questions or true-false questions. During the observations, he hardly engaged students in interactive activities such as pair work, group work, simulation and role-play.

It appeared that Belal used Bangla most of the time. During the time he used English mostly just to read passages from the text. It was my impression that Belal lacked the appropriate pedagogic and linguistic knowledge to teach the English language, particularly in grades IX and X. His classes seemed neither interactive nor motivating. He tried a little to involve students from every corner of the classroom; moreover, he made a little effort to

engage inactive students in the lesson. However he generally focused on those in the front benches. My final impression of Belal's class was that it could not be said to represent communicative language teaching.

### **5.3.3 Teacher 3: Kader**

Kader is an assistant teacher in PRN high school and has been working as an English teacher for 13 years. In addition to B.Ed qualification, he completed a B.A in Political Science and an M.A degree in Philosophy. He did not study English literature or language; however he received additional teacher training, CPD (Continuous Professional Development) for ELT. In addition to teaching, he is engaged in private tuition and coaching. He is busy in school supporting administrative work. He was also engaged with students' cultural activities and sports programmes in the school, so very active in the school environment.

During the lessons I observed, Kader regularly showed up on time for the class. He generally greeted students with 'Good morning' once he entered the classroom. Most of the time he seemed prepared for the lesson. He usually discussed the objectives of the lesson and reviewed what he had covered in the previous lesson. Most of the time he tried to involve students from every corner of the classroom, and did not focus solely on those in the front benches. Moving around the classroom, he made an effort to engage students who seemed disengaged or to be struggling with the lesson. His lessons showed signs of 'pre, while and post' activities. Kader was the only teacher who used English for a majority of the lessons but he didn't seem confident in his English use, which suggested to me that it was not his regular practice. His classes seemed to be participatory. He practised a few communicative activities. For example he occasionally involved students in pair work and group work, but when doing so, the instructions he gave students were not clear and students did not seem to understand, and during the activities, the students only spoke Bangla. This suggested to me that such activities were not a regular feature of his classes,

and perhaps he was trying to do such activities because he was being observed. This attempt to employ communicative language teaching methods indicated that he knows about such methods, but does not regularly practice them in his classes.

Apart from these few exceptions, classroom activities mainly focussed on memorization through drilling, unscaffolded listening comprehension practice and practice of grammatical constructions; it did not, however, focus on communication. Kader created few opportunities for students to ask and answer questions. Although his lessons were far from communicative, Kader is the only teacher who created opportunities in which students talked.

#### **5.3.4 Teacher 4: Noyon**

Noyon, unlike others, had just completed his studies and was at the start of his career. He has a BA and a MA in social science. He has been working as an English teacher in AKZ high school for 1 year. Moreover, he completed his S.S.C education (Secondary School Certificate) in this same school. He did not receive any training in ELT or CLT. In addition, he did not receive any additional training from project like CPD, ELTIP or TQI. However, he is the only teacher who was taught at school during a time when the CLT approach had already been implemented. He is trying to look for other jobs and seemed frustrated with his teaching position for personal reasons. Apart from teaching, he is also busy with private tuition. He was forced to take 29 classes in a week and that makes him unhappy.

Like Kader, he regularly arrived on time for class. But he usually did not greet students with 'Good morning'. In the classes that I observed, most of the time Noyon did not follow any lesson plan and his instructions for activities were not clear to students. He even skipped the lesson set in the previous class and started teaching what he had finished in the previous class. He usually did not review the previous lesson he had conducted. Moreover, he seemed unfamiliar with English language teaching techniques e.g. what to do it, how to

do and finally how to assess the students' learning and understanding in the lesson. He only attempted to involve a few able students in classroom activities. In addition, he provided little support to students who were struggling in the lesson. He generally did not move around the class.

The lessons showed no sign of having pre, while and post stage activities. He spent most of the class time reading out text in English and translating it into Bangla, asking students to read the text aloud or silently. He generally asked students to write answers to questions in the lesson with no pre-discussion and spent a lot of time checking students' answer sheets in the class. While checking, students were talking but he paid them no attention. During the observation, he did not create interactive activities, such as pair work, group work, and role play for students to get involved in talking with each other for problem solving and information exchange in the class. It appeared that he did most of the talking in the lessons. In addition, he seemed unfamiliar with the 'Book map', a teacher guide given in the national EFT textbook that presents the details of lesson contents and the techniques of teaching in the classroom. Most of the time, I found him using the guidebook, a book of questions and answers, which was made to help English lessons. But this book has been prohibited by the Bangladeshi government, as they expect teachers and students to be creative and to answer the questions in the lesson on their own. My impression was that Noyon lacked pedagogic knowledge and skills. Like, Belal he hardly used English in his lessons – mostly just in reading passages from the text. He only used the textbook, guidebook, and blackboard to deliver his lesson. His classes were mainly lecture based which was non-communicative and non-participatory.

### **5.3.5. Teacher 5: Shafiq**

Shafiq is an assistant teacher in PRN high school and has been working as an English teacher for 25 years. He completed a B.A. degree in political science during which he pursued a compulsory English language course; the module mainly focused on grammar,

reading comprehension and writing skills. He does not hold a degree or qualification in English literature or English language teaching (ELT); however he completed a B.Ed. course, a one-year teacher-training programme. Moreover, he received additional teacher training through the Teaching Quality Improvement Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP) programme. He teaches English in grades IX & X. Apart from English, he also teaches social science. He teaches 28 classes per week, which he feels is too many classes to be able to provide good quality teaching.

Shafiq's lessons were generally unstructured – for example, he did not tell the students what he was going to do, what they have to do in a lesson and he did not summarise the lesson nor give instructions for the next class. The lessons showed no sign of having a pre, while and post stage activities. Instead of doing the set lesson, sometime he started with a lesson that he taught in the last classes, perhaps because of his lack of preparation. He only rarely checked students' understanding and what they have learnt in the lesson. He tried to engage the whole class to some extent, but students were talking instead of doing the activities. He generally asked questions of the most motivated students in the class. The students seemed curious and willing to learn English, but he failed to spark their interest. There were only a few interactions noted between teacher-students and students-students in the classroom, and when they occurred, they generally occurred in Bangla. My impression of Shafiq's lessons was that he talked for most of the lesson, whereas students talked only a little. However, he was the only teacher who was friendly and easygoing in the classroom. He generally asked students about their study and personal problems and students also seemed to feel free to ask him questions.

In his classroom practice, it appeared that he used Bangla most of the class time. He used only the national textbook and the blackboard as teaching aids. My final impression of Shafiq's classroom teaching was that it could not be said to represent a student-centred class.



In summary, it came into view that majority of the teachers apparently did not stick to a lesson plan or the class time, however; a very few maintained the class time. Most of them have taught for many years but they are not well equipped for ELT; in addition, none of the teachers have relevant degrees in English or training in CLT. It appeared that the majority of teachers were overloaded with classes which apparently makes them dissatisfied with their jobs. The majority of the teachers focused on memorization in class; they mainly used reading and writing techniques; none of them practised speaking and listening activities in a true sense. It came into view that the majority of teachers seemed not to engage all the students; however, a few of them tried to ensure all students' participation and engagement. Most of the teachers did not use the technique of pre, while and post stage in a lesson. It was evident that most of the teachers did not include in interactive activities in the lessons like pair work, group work and role-play, although this occurred occasionally. It appeared that the teachers used a textbook, blackboard, chalk and duster as their only teaching aids – although some of them did not even bring these. One of the teachers also used a guidebook. It came into view that a very few teachers had good rapport with students in the school. It was evident that most of the teachers were engaged in private tuition and small businesses to earn extra money to maintain their family expenditure. Finally, it came into view that almost all the teachers employed a traditional teaching approach.

### 5.4 Data analysis

This section details the methods of collecting classroom observation data and how these data were analysed. A summary of classroom observation data is presented. The data analysis looks at the beginning, middle and ending activities in the lesson. The notes I recorded are also used to supplement the quantitative

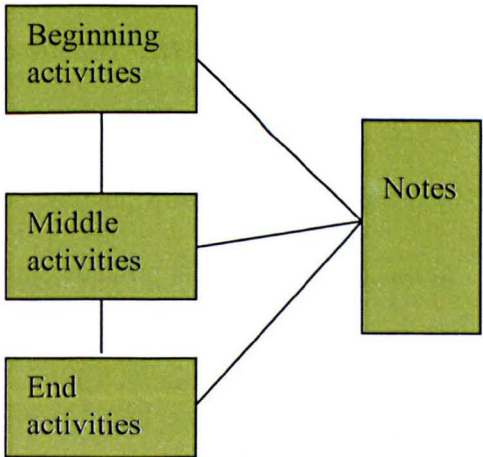


Figure 5. 2:Observation note

data. Figure 5.2 presents a visual rendering of the instrument. In addition, this section demonstrates the proportion of communicative activities, teacher talk vs. student talk time and use of English vs. Bangla in the classroom practice. I will detail the instrument used for the observation study in the following section.

### 5.4.1 Observation instrument

During observation, I used a semi-open instrument, basically quantitative in nature to capture data in the ELT classes (see Appendix IV). The observation instrument was based on defined codes, which measure classroom interactions and the features of communicative language teaching (e.g. Malamah-Thomas, 1987; Spada, 1990; TQI-SEP, 2007; EIA, 2009b; Hassan, 2011). In addition, it also focused on teacher-student talk time and the use of language: English vs. Bangla. During the observation a ‘time sampling’ technique was used to record what type of activities (from the predefined list) the teacher and students were doing at a selected point. The grid in the instrument was formed by an arrangement of rows and columns. Each column represented a classroom activity. Each row represented the time at which the observation occurred. Marks were made either by ‘B’, or ‘E’ which represented the use of Bangla or English language respectively. The time duration for each class was 40 minutes. In the instrument, the time interval was two minutes and I put a mark on the grid on every second minute. I recorded two things that belong to middle activities in the lesson:

1. **what the teacher was doing** (responding, presenting, organizing, socializing, directing, monitoring, eliciting, feedback, write silently, asking OQ, asking CQ, discussing grammar, read out the text and other).
2. **what the student was doing** (responding to the teacher, questioning the teacher, talking in pairs, talking in groups, writing, reading, reading aloud, listening, using teaching aids, choral response, and other).

In addition to the activity, I used the observation tools to record teachers’ beginning and ending activities in the classroom. Teacher beginning and ending activities were recorded following Yes and No options against each statement in the checklist. I also used a comment section to write my opinions about the overall classroom activities once I finished the observation.

### 5.4.2 Summary of Observations

I observed five teachers in two schools. A summary of the classroom observation data, such as the number of teachers’ observations, the total duration of classes, the total exact observation time and the total deficit time is given in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Summary of classroom observations

No	Teacher name	School	Number of classroom observations	Total duration of classes (minutes)	Total exact observation time	Total deficit time	Percentage of lesson time missed
1	Alom	AKZ	8	8x40=320	224	96	30%
2	Belal	PRN	7	7x40=280	210	70	25%
3	Kader	PRN	9	9x40=360	360	00	0%
4	Noyon	AKZ	12	12x40=480	400	80	17%
5	Shafiq	PRN	11	11x40=440	380	60	14%
			Total= 47 classes	Total=1880	Total=1574	Total=306	16%

Table 5.1 shows that I observed 47 classes. The duration of each class was supposed to be 40 minutes (which would have resulted in a total observation time of 1880 minutes). However, many teachers entered the classroom late and left before the class time finished so I only managed to observe a total of 1574 minutes of class time. I thus present the deficit time for each of the teachers I observed (306 minutes). Table 5.1 shows that among five teachers only one teacher maintains the lesson time, with some teachers missing as much as 30% of lesson time observed.

### 5.4.3 Analysis of the observed lessons

I used descriptive statistics, frequencies, cross-tabulations and averages to measure the teacher activities, student activities, communicative activities, teacher talk vs. student talk

time and use of English vs. Bangla in the ELT classes observed. Along with result of the observation themselves, I used my notes on the experience of observation in the classrooms as well as notes about my experience of spending time in the schools and the local area where the observations took place. This section presents the analysis of classroom observation data in terms of teacher activities, and students’ activities. In the following sections, I analyse the beginning, middle and ending activities across the five teachers’ lessons I observed.

**5.4.3.1 Beginning activities**

Beginning activities of the class are important for a successful accomplishment of the lesson objectives. Activities for the beginning of the lesson include: greeting students once they entered the class, writing the lesson topic on the blackboard, reviewing the previous lesson and learning, discussing the lesson objectives, presenting the instructions of doing any activities clearly, checking whether the students have access to the appropriate book or not, and providing feedback on students’ homework or assignment. These activities influence and lead the main activities in a lesson. Beginning activities are important in providing students’ information, attention and motivation for the activities, and also for ELT teachers’ classroom management. The beginning activities in a lesson inform an individual teacher’s management and preparation in the class. This stage of a class also gives a clear idea of the teachers’ pedagogic knowledge about classroom practice. In Table: 5.2, I present the frequency of teachers’ beginning activities in the lessons.

Table 5.2: Findings for beginning activities

Beginning activities		Number of lessons in which this occurred	Percentage of lessons in which this occurred (n=47)
1	Acknowledges the presence of the students with greeting	12	26%
2	Ask students where they are up to	10	21%
3	Simply refers students to a page	34	72%

4	Writes the lesson topic on the black board (e.g. Unit 3, Lesson 2)	27	57%
5	Recaps the pervious lesson	16	34%
6	Borrows text book from a student	17	36%
7	Provides feedback to students on homework or assignment	4	9%
8	Begins teaching without explanation of what the lesson will cover	36	77%
9	Clarifies the objectives of the lesson	12	26%
10	Questions students about their recollections of the previous lesson	9	19%
11	Begins teaching without reference to the previous learning	35	74%
12	Checks that all students have access to the appropriate books	7	15%
13	With explanation asks students to open books at the relevant page	6	13%

Categories in the above table were drawn from observation instrument that was designed to observe ELT classroom activities (see appendix IV).

### 1. Acknowledges the presence of the students with a greeting

In the lessons I observed, most of the teachers did not greet students with something like ‘Good morning’ when they entered into the classroom. Figure 5.3 shows that in only 26% of the classes did the teachers greet students with ‘Good morning’, whereas in 74% class the teachers did not

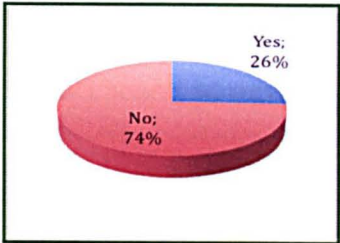


Figure 5.3: Greeting students

acknowledge the presence of the students. However, among those who greeted students, some teachers also asked them about their health and about their studies.

### 2. Ask students where they are up to

The teachers are generally clear about what lesson they are dealing with, and about lesson topic and its contents. As can be seen in Figure 5.4, only in 21% classes did teachers ask students for information about the previous lesson but did not to recap the previous lesson and so improve learning for the students’ benefits.

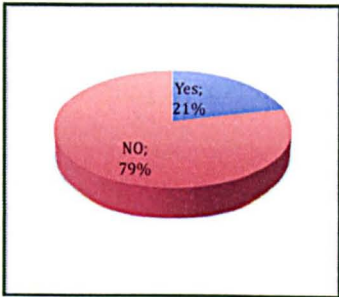


Figure 5.4: Lesson information



**3. Simply refers students to a page**

Of the lessons observed, in 72% of the classes the teachers simply told students what page in the textbook they had to open to start the lesson (see Figure 5.5).

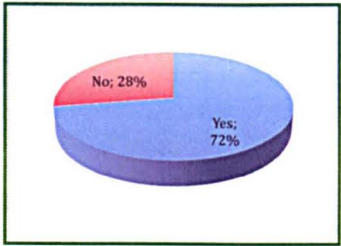


Figure 5.5: Instruction to open the book

**4. Writes the lesson topic on the black board**

One important beginning technique is to write the unit and lesson number on the blackboard e.g. Unit 3, Lesson 2. This technique can help both teachers and students to be systematic. Teachers usually write the lesson topic on the blackboard at the beginning

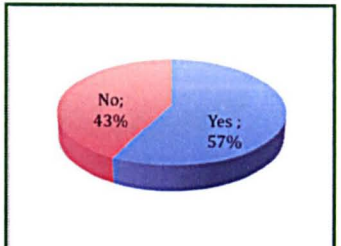


Figure 5.6: Write the lesson topic

of a lesson. However, the teachers in this study were not consistent in practising this activity and often this practice was also absent in the lessons I observed. Figure 5.6 shows that in 57% of the classes teachers wrote the lesson topic on the blackboard, however in 43% they did not.

**5. Recaps the previous lesson**

Teachers often review the lessons that they finished in the last class to check the previous teaching and learning, e.g. what they had talked about, how did they do it and what objectives they had. However, in the lessons I observed, the teachers did not frequently follow up previous learning.

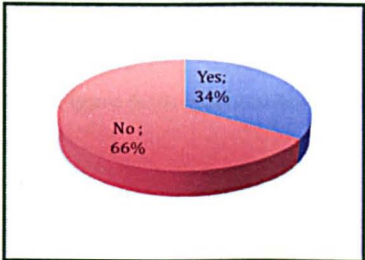


Figure 5.7: Review the previous lesson

Figure 5.7 shows that in 66% of the classes teachers did not apply this technique, and only in 34% of classes was it practised.

**6. Borrows textbook from a student**

One of the main teaching aids that teachers used in their classroom practice was the textbook. They generally carried a textbook into the classroom however; some

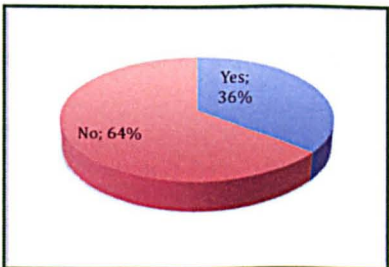


Figure 5.8: Borrowing the textbook

teachers also asked students if they could borrow a textbook. Figure 5.8 shows that in 64% of class teachers carried a textbook; however in 36% class they borrowed one from students.

**7. Provides feedback to students on homework or assignment**

Providing feedback on students' homework assignment is a beginning activity that teachers practised to check students' learning and correct their errors. Teachers made little effort to give feedback on students' homework assignment in classes I observed. Figure 5.9 shows that only in 18% of the classes did teachers use this technique, whereas, in 82% of classes they did not apply it.

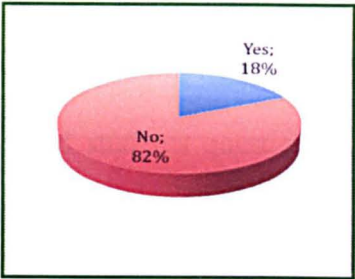


Figure 5.9: Provide feedback on assignment

**8. Begins teaching without explanation of what the lesson will cover**

One of the major requirements of classroom practice is to tell the students at the beginning of a lesson what activities they have to do and how they have to do them. In the lessons that I observed, only a few teachers used this technique. Figure 5.10 shows that in 77% of the classes teachers began teaching without talking to students about what the lesson will cover.

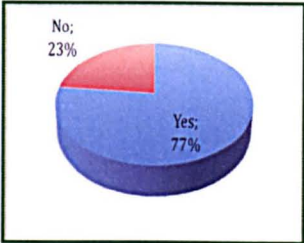


Figure 5.10: Instructions to students

**9. Clarifies objectives of the lesson**

Talking about the lesson objectives to students before the start of teaching in class is an important beginning activity. In the majority of classes teachers did not clarify the objectives of the lesson. There were, however, a few teachers who used these activities at the beginning of a lesson. Figure 5.11 shows that in 74% class, teachers did not discuss the objectives of the lesson.

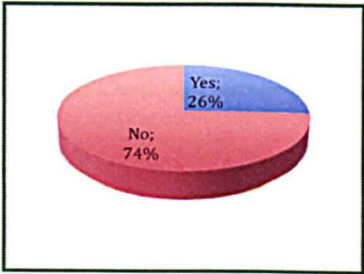


Figure 5.11: Clarifying the objectives



**10. Questions students about their recollections of the previous lesson**

Before the start of teaching, it is good practice to check how far students can remember learning in their previous lesson. This is an important beginning activity. In the lessons that I observed, however, only a few teachers engaged in this activity. Figure 5.12 shows that only 19% of class teachers asked students questions to check on their learning in the previous lesson, while the majority of them did not.

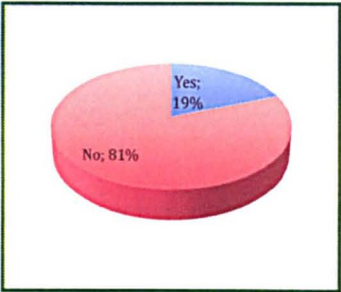


Figure 5.12: Leaning recollections

**11. Begins teaching without reference to the previous learning**

Beginning teaching by following up the previous learning is an important beginning activity in classroom practice. The teachers tried a little to engage in this activity. Figure 5.13 shows that 74% of class teachers did not refer to previous learning before they started teaching; however, only 26% practised this activity.

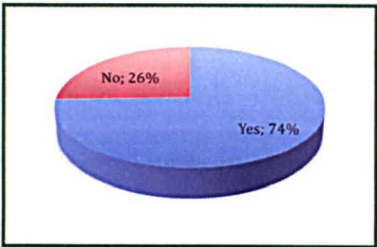


Figure 5.13: Referring to previous learning

**12. Checks that all students have access to the appropriate books**

Before starting teaching it is good practice to ensure whether all the students have access to the appropriate books or not. During the observation, teachers rarely did this. Figure 5.14 shows that only 15% of teachers engaged in this technique.

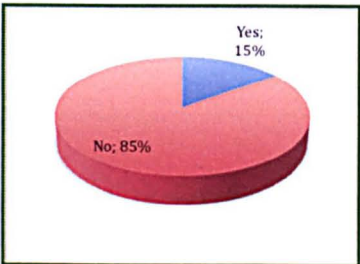


Figure 5.14: Checking appropriate access

**13. With explanation ask students to open books at the relevant page**

It is good practice to talk about the lesson objectives and the activities that will be done in a lesson and then to ask students to open their books to the relevant page to do the activities. In the lessons that I observed the teachers rarely

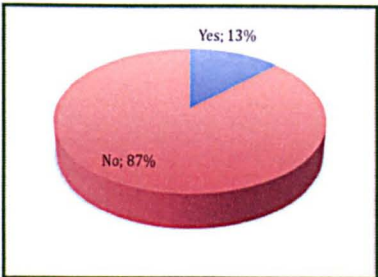


Figure 5.15: Instructions with explanation



engaged in this activity. Figure 5.15 shows that in 87% of the classes teachers did not discuss the lesson activities before asking students to open their books.

In summary, it is evident that in a majority of the classes (74%), the teachers did not greet students with 'Good morning. Observation shows that most of the teacher (89%) were aware of where they have to start in the lesson. However, it is obvious that in 72% of the classes, teachers simply asked students to open the page of the textbook without referring to previous lessons. Data also shows that in only 57% of the classes did teachers write the lesson topic on the blackboard. It is evident that in the majority classes (66%) teachers did not recap the previous lesson. In 34% of classes, teachers borrowed a textbook from a student. Only in a few classes (18%) did teachers provide feedback on students' homework or assignment. Data shows that in 77% class, teachers started teaching without explaining to the students what the lesson will cover; moreover, in 74% of the classes teachers did not discuss the objectives of the lessons. In only 19% of the classes did teachers ask reflective questions to check students' learning in the previous lessons. It is obvious that in 15% of the classes teachers checked whether students had access to appropriate books. Finally, only in 13% of the classes did teachers explain the lesson before asking students to open their books to the relevant page.

#### **5.4.3.2 Middle activities**

This section presents an analysis of the middle activities that I observed. In my observation schedule, middle activities are the main teacher activities and student activities in the lessons. Teacher activities focussed on the teacher role, teaching techniques and ELT content as practised in the lessons. Similarly, student activities included the type of activities and the techniques used to do them in the class.

### 5.4.3.2.1 Teacher activities

Table 5.3: Summary of teacher activities

Number	Teacher name	School	Number of classroom observation	Teacher Activities														Total categories
				Responding	Presenting	Organizing	Socializing	Directing	Monitoring	Eliciting	Feedback	Write silently	Asking OQ	Asking CQ	Discussing grammar	Reading out the text	Other	
I	Alom	AKZ	8	5	3	6	00	00	1	2	3	15	16	12	25	22	2	112
II	Belal	PRN	7	6	6	4	00	00	00	3	4	20	7	10	20	23	2	105
III	Kader	PRN	9	20	30	14	00	00	8	9	13	10	26	14	19	16	1	180
IV	Noyon	AKZ	12	10	13	9	00	00	2	3	5	36	28	27	36	29	2	200
V	Shafiq	PRN	11	15	11	10	00	00	3	4	8	30	15	21	33	37	3	190
Total	05	02	47	56	63	43	00	00	14	21	33	111	92	84	133	127	10	787

Categories in the above table were drawn from observation instrument that was designed to observe ELT classroom activities (see appendix IV). This section presents a summary of teacher activities that I was seeking to observe in lessons (See Table 5.3) and also defines and explains these activities. These activities include responding, presenting, organizing, socializing, monitoring, eliciting, directing, feedback, write silently, asking open questions (OQ), asking closed questions (CQ), discussing grammar, reading out the text and ‘other activities’.

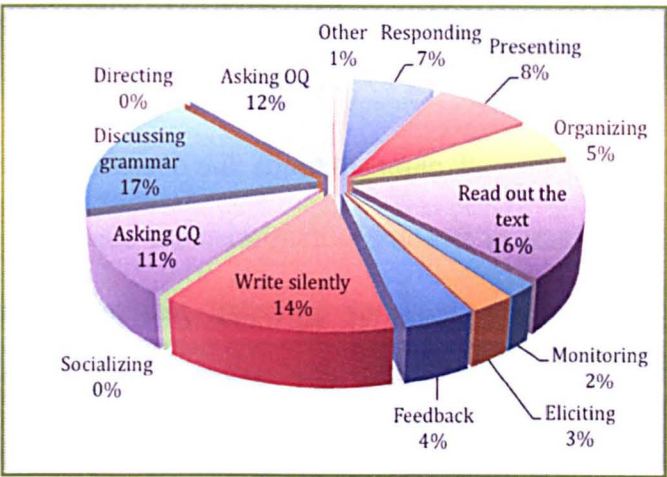
In Table 5.3, it is evident that teachers practised grammar discussion, reading out the text and writing silently most frequently. The table also shows that none of teachers’ practised socializing in the class e.g. role-play and simulation activities, which mainly focus on communication practice i.e. speaking and listening in a created situation. Moreover, it is also obvious that none of the teachers used directing techniques like gesture or mime. The teachers used a few monitoring and eliciting techniques in the classes observed. Teachers used responding, presenting, and organizing but not so frequently. Teachers used open and closed questioning techniques frequently in the lessons. In the following section, I will define each of these activities and present the percentage of their occurrence in the classes observed.

**5.4.3.2.1.1 Defining and analysing the coded categories**

This section defines and discusses the teachers’ coded activities. In addition, in Figure 5:16 it presents the percentage of these activities that was found in the total lessons observed. The average of these activities was based on the frequency of them presented in Table: 5.3. To calculate these averages, it takes into account total frequency of individual category and their frequency in total.

**Responding**

Responding activities include teacher-student communication in the classroom. Teachers respond to students' activities in a variety of ways, such as answering their questions, praising their activities, complimenting them, and confirming that their answers are correct. Figure 5.16



**Figure 5.16: Teacher activities in the lessons**

shows that teachers practised this activity 7 % of the time in their classes.

**Socializing**

Socializing in the classroom focuses on practising social interaction activities like role-play and simulation. Teachers practise these kind of activities with a view to familiarising students with a variety of social contexts like buying books in a library, talking to the head teacher about leave extension, and buying travel tickets. These interactions in the classroom encourage students to practise language skills in the greater social context. Figure 5.16 shows that none of the teachers practised this technique.

**Directing**

Directing activities involve teachers' use of non-verbal activities in the lesson. These activities include using gesture or mime to communicate meaning effectively. There was no sign of this activity in the classroom practices that I observed. Figure 5.16 shows that its level of practice was 0%.

**Organizing**

Organizing techniques in the lesson show teachers' structuring of the lessons for example, providing instructions to students for doing activities. In addition, this technique also requires teachers to coordinate students in doing activities individually, in pairs and

groups. The teachers showed little engagement in this technique. Figure 5.16 shows that they applied such organizing techniques during 5% of the lessons observed.

### **Presenting**

Presenting is a classroom technique that teachers use to talk about the topic, its content and objectives in the class. By applying this technique teachers involve students in practising different language skills, e.g. vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Teachers may present in the class the type of activities and skills that can be practised in the lesson. Figure 5.16 shows that the presenting technique was practised 8% during the lessons observed.

### **Feedback**

Teachers provide feedback either verbal or written form, e.g. giving their views, suggestions and comments on students' class work, homework and assignments. Teachers engaged in this activity in only 4% of the lesson time that I observed (Figure 5.16).

### **Eliciting**

Elicitation techniques are used to check students' understanding of the lesson. This technique helps teachers to draw out students' responses and answers to questions they asked in the lessons. In addition, it engages teachers and students in verbal communication as part of the classroom practice. Figure 5.16 shows that teachers used eliciting technique in only 3% of the lesson time

### **Monitoring**

Monitoring is a technique that teachers engage to facilitate students' activities in the classroom. Teachers observe students while doing activities and move around the class to give support to their difficulties and problems. This technique helps the teacher and student to come into contact as an integral part of the classroom practice. It was seen in just 2% of the lesson time that I observed (Figure 5.16).

### **Discussing grammar**

The teachers discuss grammar, the linguistic aspects of the lessons, for example sentence structure, vocabulary, prepositions, use of articles, tense, verbs, modal verbs and adverbs.

The teachers practised this aspect most frequently in the lessons observed. Figure 5.16 shows that teachers practised grammar techniques 17% of the lesson time.

### **Asking closed questions (CQ)**

Closed questions are questions that require a short, correct answer, used to check students' understanding and learning in the lessons. Figure 5.16 shows that teachers used closed questions 11% of the lesson time I observed. This is almost equivalent to asking open questions in the lessons occurred.

### **Asking open questions (OQ)**

An open question is a technique teachers apply to check students' learning and understanding in the lessons. They asked students to answer these types of questions. Figure 5.16 shows that they asked open question 12% of the time in the lessons observed.

### **Reading out the text**

The teachers spent considerable time in the class reading out the textbook. This was the second highest frequently used classroom practice. Figure 5.16 shows that teachers spent 16% of the lesson time reading out the textbook. The teachers used this technique in the classroom without a set objective in the lessons and they did not give clear instructions before doing this.

### **Write silently**

According to Figure 5.16 writing silently was one of the major practices that teachers undertook in the lessons that I observed. The teachers, for example, spent time silently drawing tables or writing open and closed questions on the blackboard. The figure shows that teachers spent 14% of the time in the lessons on this kind of activity.

**Other**

Other activities refers to beyond teaching activities in the lessons such as, the teacher read out a notice, left the classroom for some time or simply silent for a while.

### 5.4.3.2.2 Student activities

Table 5.4: Summary of student activities

Number	Teacher name	School	Number of classroom observation	Student Activities										
				Responding to the teacher	Questioning the teacher	Talking in pairs	Talking in groups	Writing	Reading	Reading aloud	Listening	Choral response	Other	Total categories
I	Alom	AKZ	8	29	2	00	00	26	9	32	12	00	2	112
II	Belal	PRN	7	18	4	00	00	30	5	24	21	00	3	105
III	Kader	PRN	9	38	3	4	2	45	21	28	34	4	1	180
IV	Noyon	AKZ	12	45	2	00	00	57	13	53	27	00	3	200
V	Shafiq	PRN	11	31	6	2	3	60	8	44	31	3	2	190
Total	05	02	47	161	17	6	5	218	56	181	125	07	11	787



Categories in the above table were drawn from observation instrument that was designed to observe ELT classroom activities (see appendix IV). This section presents a summary of student activities. In addition, it defines and explains these activities. Student activities include responding to the teacher, questioning the teacher, talking in pairs, talking in groups, writing, reading, reading aloud, listening, choral response and other. Table 5.4 shows student activities in the lessons that I observed. It shows that students' most frequent activities were writing, reading aloud, responding to the teacher and listening. The least practised activities were talking in pairs, talking in groups, choral response and questioning the teacher.

5.4.3.2.2.1 Defining and analysing the coded categories

This section defines and analyses the coded categories of student activities in the lessons.

Figure 5.17 also presents the average of these activities based on the frequency of them presented in Table: 5.4. To calculate these averages, it takes into account total frequency of individual category and their frequency in total.

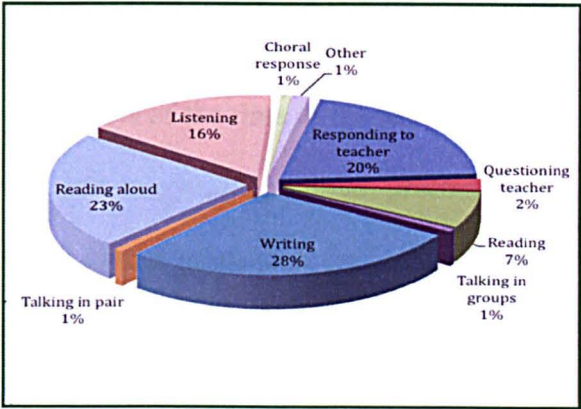


Figure 5.17: Student activities in the lessons

Responding to the teacher

In the lessons that I observed, I found the students regularly engaged in communication with teachers by answering their questions. Figure 5.17 shows that students spent 20% of the lesson time responding to the teacher.

Questions to teacher

In order to know and clarify their understanding, students ask their teachers questions as part of classroom interaction. Figure 5.17 shows that students rarely asked teachers questions. They practised this kind of activity in just 2% of the lesson.

### **Talking in pairs:**

Talking in pairs creates opportunities for students to interact with each other. This was one of the least practiced activities in the lessons that I observed. Only two of the five teachers engaged a little bit in this kind of activity. Figure 5.17 shows that students got very few opportunities for pair work; just 1% of the lessons observed.

### **Talking in groups**

Like pair work, in a group work activity the students have opportunities to talk with other participants in order to share their opinions and exchange information. Students got very few opportunities for this activity too and it was seen in just 1% of the lesson time (Figure 5.17).

### **Writing**

Writing is one of the 'four skills' that are commonly practised in language learning. Writing was the only activity in which students were involved most of time in the lessons that I observed. Figure 5.17 shows that students spent 28% of the time in the lessons doing writing activities. However the writing involved just copying, grammar practice and answering of closed or open questions. Students also used a guidebook for answering the questions they were asked to write.

### **Reading**

Silent reading opportunities are created in the lessons with a view to checking students' reading comprehension. Figure 5.17 shows that students were involved in this activity in 7% of the lessons.

### **Reading aloud**

This was the second highest practised activity in the lessons. Students were engaged in this activity a lot of time in the lessons. Figure 5.17 show that students spent 23% of the lesson on this activity. However, instructions were not clear to students for doing reading aloud activities.

**Listening**

This is one of the basic skills in English language learning that was not practised frequently in the lessons observed. The main activity observed was listening to teachers’ lesson instructions and discussion. Students were hardly involved in structured listening activities. Figure 5.17 shows that students spent 16% of lesson time listening to their teacher.

**Choral response**

This technique is used to elicit students’ responses all together in lesson. This was one of the least practised categories in the lessons. Figure 5.17 shows that students were involved only 1% of the lesson time observed.

**Other**

Other activities refer to instances such as students’ time spent with no activity; confusion of instructions and talking in the absence of a teacher. Students spent 1% of the lesson time doing this type of practice (Figure 5.17).

**5.4.3.2.3 Type of activities in the lessons**

Table 5.5: Activities in the lessons observed

Type of activity	Percentage observed in total lesson time
Structural activities	75%
<i>Listening</i>	16%
<i>Reading aloud</i>	23%
<i>Reading</i>	7%
<i>Writing</i>	28%
<i>Choral response</i>	1%
Quasi-communicative activities (e.g. Dialogue practice)	0%
Functional communicative activities	24%
<i>Talking in pairs</i>	1%
<i>Talking in groups</i>	1%
<i>Responding to the teacher</i>	20%

<i>Questioning teacher</i>	2%
<b>Social interaction activities</b> (e.g. Role play)	0%
<b>Sub-total</b>	99%
<b>Other</b> (e.g. time spent with no activity; confusion of instructions and talking in the absence of a teacher)	1%
<b>Total</b>	100%

Categories in the above table were drawn from Figure 5.17. Another objective of my observation was to record what types of communicative activities were practiced in the English language lessons. My observation instrument was designed to keep the focus on communicative activities like structural activities, quasi-communicative activities, functional communication activities, and social interaction activities. Structural activities refer to practice of grammar (such as tense, verb, adverb, preposition, voice change, sentence construction), listening activities, writing tasks and reading activities. Quasi-communicative activities refer to dialogue practice in class with a view to practising speaking. Apart from these two types of activities, functional and social interaction activities give focus on practising communication in the extended context. Functional communication activities refer to talk between teacher and student and student and student, for example pair work and group work. Social interaction activities focus on practicing communication in an imagined extended social context like role-play and simulation (Littlewood, 1981). I present the percentage of activities observed in Table 5.5 which is based on student activities in the lessons (See Figure 5:17). Table 5.5 shows that teachers practised structural activities most frequently, 75% of the lesson time which include listening (16%), reading aloud (23%), reading (7%), writing (28%), and choral response (1%). None of the teachers practised quasi-communicative and social interaction activities. Evidence shows that teachers practised a few functional communicative activities, 25% of the lesson time. These activities include things like answering true/false questions, filling in the right forms of verbs, and filling in the gaps. While these activities have been categorized in this study as ‘functional communicative’, they could also be classified as

structural, as in the majority of cases they did not require real communication from students but simply drilled rote learning. So concluding that the lessons consisted of 24% of functional communicative activities is being generous. In any class, it is clear that ‘structural activities’ dominated the lessons observed.

**5.4.3.2.4 Teacher talk vs. student talk in the lessons**

This section discusses a general impression of teacher talk vs. student talk in the lessons that I observed. Percentages of teacher-student talk time are indicative of teaching methods and principles in the ELT classroom practice. CLT focuses on student-centred classrooms in which students have the opportunities to doing much of talking in the lessons (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Littlewood, 1981; Berns, 1990; Brown, 2001). The teacher is assumed to talk less so that he/she could organise and facilitate communicative activities in the lessons and provide supports to students when they need it (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Breen and Candlin, 1980; Brown, 2001).

Table 5.6 presents a picture of teacher vs. student talking time in the lessons that I observed. Percentages in this table are calculated taking into account the frequency given in Table 5.3.

Table 5.6: Summary of teacher talk vs. student talk

No	Teacher name	School	Teacher talk%	Student talk%
1	Alom	AKZ	85	15
2	Belal	PRN	87	13
3	Kader	PRN	68	32
4	Noyon	AKZ	89	11
5	Shafiq	PRN	83	17

Categories in the above table were drawn from teacher activities and student activities in Table 5.3 and Table 5.4 respectively.

Table 5.6 shows that majority of the teachers talked most of the time in the lessons. Students were given only few opportunities to talk, for example in pairs and groups. Only two teachers tried to involve students in these activities. In the lessons that I observed, student talk mainly related to responding to the teacher’s questions. Data suggests that

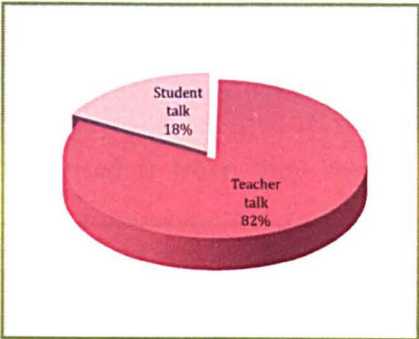


Figure 5.18: Teacher talk vs. student talk

among these five teachers, Noyon talked most of the lesson time and created least opportunities for students to talk in the lessons. Figure 5.18 presents a combined explanation of teacher talk vs. student talk in the lessons that I observed. It shows that teachers talked 82% of the lesson time; whereas students talked only 18% of the time.

### 5.4.3.2.5 Use of English vs. Bangla in the lessons

Recording which language teachers and students used in the lessons and how much they used was another focus of my observation. This section presents the use of English and Bangla in the lessons I observed. Table 5.7 presents the percentages of use of English vs. Bangla in the lessons that I observed.

Table 5.7: Use of English vs. Bangla

	Teacher name	School	Use of English	Use of Bangla
1	Alom	AKZ	48%	52%
2	Belal	PRN	12%	88%
3	Kader	PRN	59%	41%
4	Noyon	AKZ	9%	91%
5	Shafiq	PRN	18%	82%

Categories in the above table were drawn from teacher activities and student activities in Table 5.3 and Table 5.4 respectively. Table: 5.7 shows that among five teachers three of them used Bangla most frequently in the lessons that I observed and two of them used more English than others; however, they seemed not regular and confident in classroom practice. It is evident that one teacher used English only (9%) of the lesson time which



perhaps, indicates the teachers’ lack of English skills or lack of confidence using it in the lessons.

The students hardly used English when talking and they only used it when they were answering questions in the lessons. Their use of English in the class was basically memorization practice. The students even used Bangla in a few pair and group work activities, though teachers encouraged them to speak in English. Figure 5.19 shows a combined picture of use of English vs Bangla in the

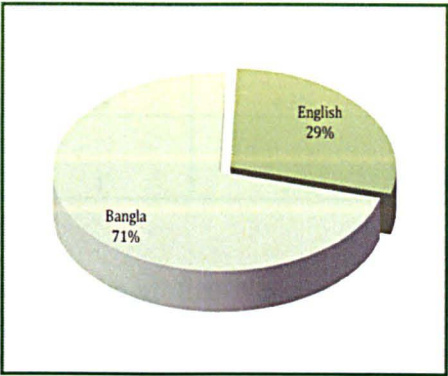


Figure 5.19: Use of English vs. Bangla

lessons that I observed. It shows that teachers used Bangla 71% of the lesson time; whereas they used English 29% of the time.

5.4.3.3 Ending activities

Like ‘beginning activities’, ending activities also have pedagogic importance. The purpose of such activities is to review what has been done in the class, to ask summary questions in order to check students’ understanding and to tell the students what will follow in the next class. In addition, ending activities can involve collecting students’ class work to correct errors and to give feedback also has impact on over all learning. At the end of a lesson to set a homework assignment for students and to provide feedback on it plays an important role in students’ learning. How the teacher ended the lesson was also a focus of my classroom observation. The findings are presented in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Findings for ending activities

Ending activities		Number of classes where this activity occurred	Percentage of classes where this activity occurred (n=47)
1	Recaps what the lesson has covered	11	23%
2	Provides feedback on the way students have worked during the lesson	6	13%

3	Sets homework or assignments to be completed before the next lesson.	4	9%
4	Asks summary questions to assess student's understanding of the concepts covered in the lesson	9	19%
5	Collects students' class work for marking	3	7%
6	Tell students where the lesson is leading, i.e. what will follow in the next lesson	13	28%
7	Tell students to close their books and dismisses them	29	62%
8	Stops teaching and leaves the room without doing any of the above (1-7)	4	9%

Categories in the above table were drawn from observation instrument that was designed to observe ELT classroom activities (see appendix IV).

### 1. Recaps what the lesson has covered

To recap what the lesson has covered is important because it helps check students' understanding and contribute to teachers' future lesson planning. In the lessons that I observed, very few teachers used this technique to review what had been studied in the lesson. Figure 5.20 shows that in only 23% of the lessons did teachers review what the lesson had covered.

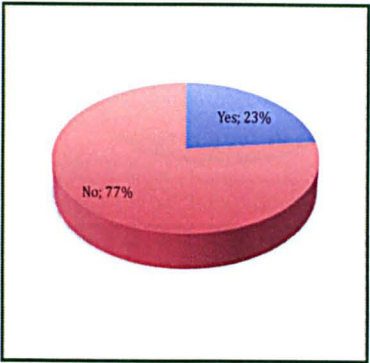


Figure 5. 20: Recap the lessons

### 2. Provides feedback on the way students have worked during the lesson

Teachers provide feedback on students' activities that they practised during the lesson in order to influence students' motivation and participation in the classroom. During the observation, I found most of the teachers involved rarely this technique. Figure 5.21 shows that only in 13% of classes teachers provide feedback on the way students had worked during the lesson.

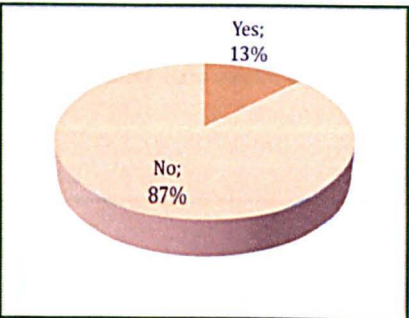


Figure 5.21: Provide feedback during the lesson



**3. Sets homework or assignments to be completed before the next lesson.**

At the end of a lesson, teachers often assign homework or an assignment for students with a view to creating opportunities for individual work at home and to keeping their focus on activities. Students are asked to finish this work before the next lesson. Figure 5.22 shows that in 9% of classes

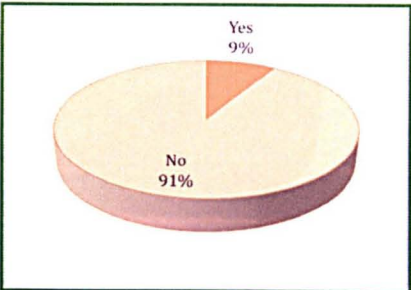


Figure 5.22: Set homework or assignment

teachers set homework or an assignment for students to complete before the next lesson.

**4. Asks summary questions to assess students' understanding of the concepts covered in the lesson**

Teachers ask summary questions to check students' understanding in the lesson they have finished. In addition, teachers apply this technique to keep the students active and

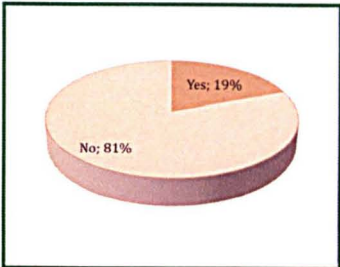


Figure 5.23: Ask summary questions

attentive in the class. I observed a few teachers asking summary questions in the lesson.

Figure 5.23 shows that in 19% of the classes teachers asked summary questions.

**5. Collects students' class work for marking**

At the end of an activity, teachers may collect students' class work with a view to marking the errors and giving feedback on it. Figure 5.24 shows that only in 7% of the classes did teachers collect students' class work for marking.

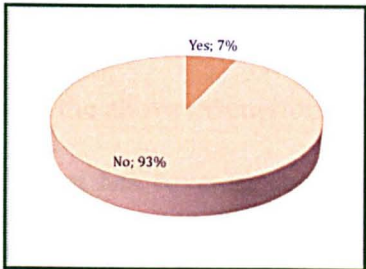


Figure 5.24: Collect class work for marking

**6. Tell students where the lesson is leading, i.e. what will follow in the next lesson**

To prepare students for the next lesson, at the end of a class, teachers may tell the students about the lesson that will follow in the next class. During the observations I observed

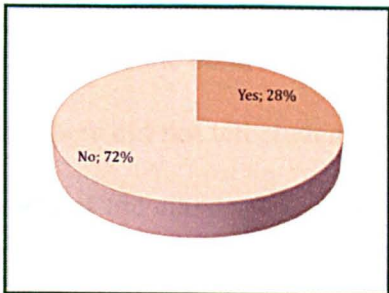


Figure 5.25: Talking about next lesson

some teachers practising this technique. Figure 5.25 shows that in 28% of the classes teachers talked about the next lesson at the end of the class.

**7. Tell students to close their books and dismiss them**

At the end of a lesson teachers may ask students to close their books and finish the lesson. Figure 5.26 shows that in 38% of the classes teachers used this technique.

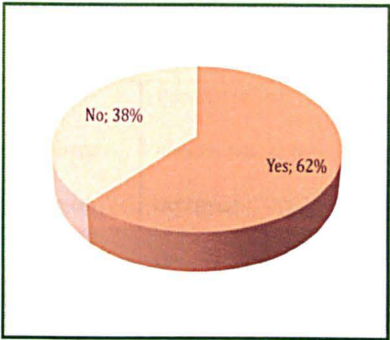


Figure 5.26: Finish the lesson

**8. Stops teaching and leaves the room without doing any of the above (1-7)**

Teachers generally practise at least one of the above ending activities (1-7) at the conclusion of the lessons. But it can happen, rarely, that teachers just stop teaching and leave the classroom without practising any one of the ending

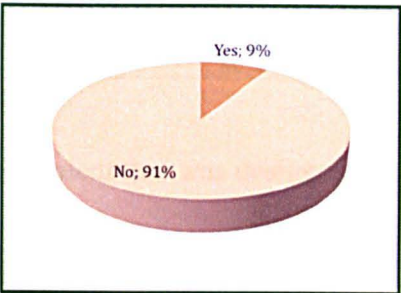


Figure 5.27: Practicing the ending activities

activities. Figure 5.27 shows that in 9% of the classes the teachers stopped teaching and left the room without doing any of the above ending activities; however in 91% class they did practice at least one of the ‘ending activities’.

In summary, teachers’ percentage of ending activities is evident in the above discussion. At the end of the lesson a few teachers (23%) review what the lesson has covered, provide feedback on students’ activities, (13%) and set homework or an assignment (9%). Data also reports that a few teachers (19%) asked summary questions to check students’ understanding in the lessons. Data further shows that in only 7% of the classes teachers collected students’ class work for marking. It is also evident that 28% of the class teachers talked about the next lesson at the end. In 38% of the classes, teachers did not tell students to close their books and simply dismissed the class. Finally in 9% of the classes, teachers simply stopped teaching and left the classroom.



5.4.3.4 General impression of the teacher

At end of each observation, I noted my general impression of whether the teachers seemed motivated and prepared and whether they engaged all the students in the class.

Table 5.9: Findings for general impression

Categories		Number of classes where this occurred	Percentage of classes where this occurred (n=47)
1	Seemed motivated?	16	34%
2	Seemed prepared?	10	21%
3	Engaged all students?	19	40%

Categories in the above table were drawn from observation instrument that was designed to observe ELT classroom activities (see appendix IV).

1. Seemed motivated?

My general impression regarding teachers’ motivation in the lessons that I observed was that in most classes teachers did not seemed well motivated. Figure 5.28 shows that in about a third of classes (34%) teachers seemed motivated.

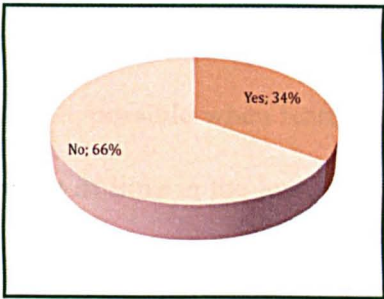


Figure 5.28: Teachers' motivation

2. Seemed prepared?

It is widely accepted that teachers’ preparation influences the teaching and learning in the classroom practice. It also affects students’ interest and success in the classroom activities. The teachers seemed prepared in a few cases, but the majority of them engaged in little preparation for the

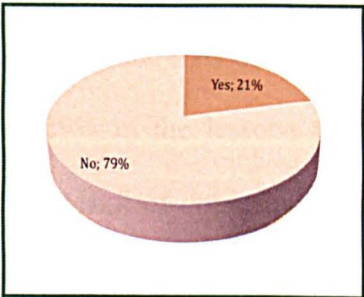


Figure 5.29: Teachers' preparation

lessons that I observed. Figure 5.29 shows that in 21% of classes the teachers seemed prepared; however in 79% class teachers seemed unprepared.

### 3. Engaged all students?

In classroom teaching, teachers ensure students' participation and engagement in the activities. It is important in creating equal opportunities for students at all levels of attainment and aptitude in order to achieve the objectives of the lesson. It seemed to me that in a majority of the classes teachers did not engage all

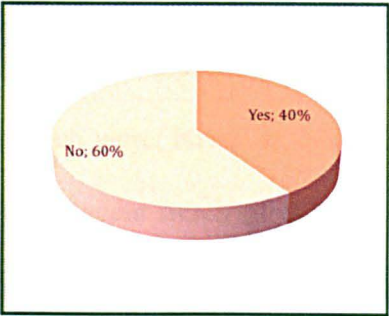


Figure 5.30: Engaging the students

students. Figure 5.30 shows that in 40% of classes teachers engaged students in activities; however in 60% of classes they did not.

### 5.5 Discussion

Classroom observation data suggested that teachers are apparently very similar in their teaching techniques; however, there are a few exceptions. Teachers talked for most of lesson time (82%). They created a few opportunities for student talk in the lesson i.e. pair work (1%) and group work (1%). ‘A key principle of communicative language teaching is that the students should receive as much opportunity to speak as is possible when learning English (EIA, 2011:1)’ Cook claims that when teachers talk most of time in the lessons, it thoroughly obstructs the students’ chances to develop skills in the target language (2001). Generally, one of the roles of English language teachers is to motivate their students to speak and give them the opportunities to use the language they are learning (Nunan, 1991). Observation data suggests that students rarely used English in talking and they only used it to answer questions in the lessons. Its level of practice was 29% in the lessons that I observed, whereas use of Bangla was 71% and that indicates the lack of opportunities to practice target language in the lessons.

It is evident that teachers spent the majority of the lesson time reading out the text (16%) with the Bangla translation text without any pre-set objectives. Data further shows that teachers spent a good amount of time writing silently on the black board, though in most

cases instruction seemed not so clear. They used to write questions, answer of the questions, word meaning and grammar items. Teachers neither practised socializing (0%) or directing (0%) activities in the lessons. Teachers spent a moderate amount of time asking open questions (12%), and closed questions (11%), which were, however, basically based on memorization practice. Evidence shows that teachers spent much of the lesson time (17%) discussing grammar, which was mostly memorization practice in isolation. It is evident that teachers spent 75% of the lesson time doing structural activities: grammar practice (such as tense, verb, adverb, preposition, voice change, sentence construction), writing tasks and reading activities. The teachers did practise a few functional communicative activities (25%) in the lessons, mainly asking and answering, which was basically based on memorization. However, students were involved a little in pair and group work activity. Teachers practised no quasi-communicative (0%) and social interaction activity (0%). It is obvious that students spent most of the lesson time doing writing which was also mainly based on memorization. Teachers involved students in reading aloud activity in the lessons with no clear instructions, presumably, to assess students' reading skills. Data suggests that students spent a good amount of time (23%) reading aloud following the teacher instruction, but with a little purpose. Teachers also involved students in reading (silent reading) activity and they asked students to answer closed and open questions when finished reading; however instructions seemed not so clear to students. It is obvious that teachers spent 16% of the lesson time reading out the text apparently with no preset purpose and no clear instructions to students. Although students were involved in listening; however, many seemed not active. Teachers hardly involved students in listening practice in a true sense. Students' listening time was (16%) of the time in the lessons that I observed. Evidence obviously indicates teachers' deficiency in teaching pedagogy. Students spent the majority of the time (20%) responding to the teacher which was limited to answering questions and memorization practice. Students, however, spent only 2% of the lesson time questioning to teacher which was perhaps an impact of

memorization on students' learning or may be they were afraid of asking their teachers. This suggests that most of the classroom instruction was teacher-centred and predominantly traditional, hardly student-centred and communicative.

The findings here confirm what was found in an EIA study. An EIA Study (2009b) in Bangladesh reports that 'The pedagogic approach adopted in most lessons observed did not encourage a communicative approach to learning English (EIA, 2009b: 2)'. Moreover, the TQI Baseline Study in Bangladesh further reports that

'If there is such a thing in Bangladesh as a typical lesson in a secondary school, then it begins with the teacher borrowing a book from one of the students and asking which page there up to. He then proceeds to teach from the book, sometimes varying the delivery by asking the students to take turns reading the text, or asking the occasional closed questions. The students are not required to think other than remember the text and there is no active learning on their part. There is no evidence of a lesson plan to guide the teaching process, and additional teaching and learning resources (2007:3)'.

Unfortunately, my study revealed a similar situation.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

In the beginning of this chapter I presented general aspects found through classroom observations. I then presented the summary of observation data and a 'sketch' of each individual teacher's profile. I analysed the observation data presented as three stages of a lesson e.g. beginning, middle and ending activities. Both teacher and student activities in the lessons are presented in these three stages. In addition, this discussion has highlighted particular pedagogical and ELT aspects in the lessons. Apart from this, this chapter has presented a general observation of communicative activities, language use (L1 versus L2) and teacher-student talk time in the lessons.

## **Chapter 6: Pedagogical difficulties**

### **6.1 Introduction**

In Chapter 5, I presented an analysis of the classroom observation data collected for this project. In this chapter, I will further analyse one of the major themes that arose through the analysis of the interview data: pedagogical difficulties. When I interviewed teachers and students, they both explained the difficulties and problems faced when trying to use CLT in the classroom. These difficulties have been categorized under the following headings: lack of pre-service training; inadequate in-service training; lack of opportunities for input into policy making; lack of English skills: teachers and students; inconsistent examination system; lack of grammar teaching in context; influence of previous methods; impact of teachers' private tuition; separation of female and male students; and lack of general educational techniques. The lack of general educational techniques include things like: classroom management skills; lack of lesson plans, Teachers' Guide or Book Map; no awareness of beginning, middle and ending activities in the lessons; lack of integrated skills practice; lack of interactive activities and Use of guidebook. These categories are elaborated in the following sections.

### **6.2 Lack of pre-service training**

Pre-service training is instruction which takes place before a person begins a job. In teacher education, it is mainly designed to develop teachers' pedagogic skills and teaching techniques, by developing skills in things like lesson planning and classroom management, and cultivating appropriate professional qualities like professional behavior and attitudes. A major focus of this training is the teaching practice in which the teachers are attached to a primary or secondary school under the guidance of an experienced teacher. During this school placement, teachers get opportunities to learn and develop pedagogic and professional skills by practising classroom teaching.

The teachers in this study unanimously reported that opportunities for pre-service training were limited and none of the English teachers received this training. It also appeared that lack of this training caused many of their perceived difficulties and problems. Teachers reported:

I believe lack of teaching skills is a problem for new teachers. I think a person needs training before starting a career as a teacher but unfortunately such opportunities are very limited. I did not get any pre-service training. I faced problems and difficulties in the beginning of my teaching profession (Kader).

You see, in our country before joining as a teacher we generally do not get any pre-service training. Actually opportunities are very limited for this kind of training. I think this a big problem for teaching (Alom).

I am a fresh university graduate. To be honest, my knowledge about teaching is very limited. I am teaching English but this is my third year in this school. Unfortunately I did not get any training for teaching in this school. Now I realise teaching English is really difficult without training (Noyon).

The teachers unanimously agreed that the government should provide pre-service training for every teaching professional to ensure better teaching and learning in the schools.

Teachers noted:

I am following what I learned during my own student life. I believe training is a must for teaching English, if I had teacher training before joining this post, I could do well in my present position. I think our government should provide this training to prospective teachers (Noyon).

I believe pre-service training is a must for everyone to provide quality teaching in the schools. You know, sometimes we think teaching is very easy but actually it is not easy. I think without training we cannot teach what we are assumed to teach. Our government should ensure this training to future teachers for good teaching in the schools (Kader).



The teachers further reported that good subject knowledge (of English) does not guarantee a good teaching professional; they need training. Teachers said:

You see, I received in-service training but I still believe that if I had received pre-service training, I could have avoided many difficulties in my teaching. Completing graduation with a good grade does not mean that I can be a good teacher. I might have good subject knowledge but I did not have enough knowledge of how to plan, how to teach and how to manage the class. It is my experience that pre-service training is essential for everyone. But unfortunately, such opportunities are insufficient (Alom).

For teaching, I think we need to have good subject knowledge (English) but training is essential. To be a good teacher we need to know the teaching techniques and through training we can learn these (Kader).

The teachers further unanimously reported that it was difficult for them to apply and practice in-service trainings as they started teaching without training. Teachers reported:

We start teaching without training. We teach for a long time. What we do in the class e.g. activities, techniques and methods, it becomes a normal and habitual thing. But when we receive any in-service training, it is difficult to apply in class. I think we need to know what and how to do activities in the class before joining. It could help us with methods and techniques to follow in class. I believe pre-service training is more important than in-service training (Kader).

You see, I did not receive any training but I am teaching English. For teaching, I am just relying on my past memories. I follow my teachers' teaching techniques –how they taught in the class. I am learning from my colleagues. I also use techniques that I feel comfortable with in the class. I am learning from different sources. This is now a habitual thing for me. Yes, I think this could be a problem to bring change in my practice following an in-service training (Noyon).

Findings suggest that all the teachers started their teaching career without training. They therefore practised whatever they experienced themselves during their own student life, or whatever way they felt easy and comfortable. Their practice then became embedded and habitual. It also appeared that due to lack of pre-service training, their current practice conflicted with the training they received later through in-service training, which presumably made it difficult to change their teaching practice.

Many scholars claim that inadequate teacher education and training obstructs opportunity for educational change and teacher development in ELT in Bangladesh (Hamid, 2011; Chowdhury and Phan Le Ha, 2008; Rahman, 2007). It also appears that in the South-East Asian context, English teacher education and training has not been entirely successful in improving and enhancing ELT classroom instruction, despite considerable investment (Nunan, 2003; Qi, 2009; Wedell, 2008).

### **6.3 Inadequate in-service training**

In-service training is when practising teachers are provided with opportunities for training to develop teaching and professional skills with respect to their existing knowledge about teaching methods and techniques. During this training period teachers can share their practical teaching experience with other teachers and with the trainers. They can also share opinions and ideas to improve their own teaching practice. It appeared that only one out of five of the teachers received ELTIP training. Moreover, none of them received training on the CLT approach, which, according to Bangladesh government policy, they have to practice and implement in the classroom. In interviews, teachers unanimously claimed that this training did not suffice. Furthermore, they claimed that the training that they did receive lacked monitoring and evaluation, and therefore also opportunities to get further feedback and suggestions. Lack of these opportunities created difficulties when attempting to transfer new teaching approaches into realistic pedagogic actions. Teachers asserted:

You know we just start practising once we received training. I think it needs continuous discussion, feedback, and monitoring. I received CPD, TQI-SEP, and ELTIP training. Unfortunately, I did not receive any training on CLT. I try to implement what I am provided in the training. I face problems and difficulties in the class. But I did not get any further opportunities to talk about these difficulties. It was really very difficult to change practices in the class. It would be helpful if I could share my experiences and problems for feedback. I think it is a big problem (Alom).

I received in-service training, e.g. CPD [Continuous Professional Development], but I did not have opportunities to get training either in ELTIP [English Language Teaching Improvement Project] or CLT. As an English teacher I think I should have received training in ELTIP or CLT. I am teaching English but it is very difficult to practice the communicative approach without any training in it. It's true that we received training but the monitoring and evaluation system is very weak. This is a big problem for us. We get training but we are not provided with further feedback and suggestions. Once we get training, nobody listens to our difficulties and problems that we face in the schools. Finally we give up the training. We do not even have opportunities to share our experience with teachers in the schools (Kader).

In a context where in-service training is insufficient, the majority of the teachers remained untrained; additionally, the teachers reported that the training they had received did not reflect the realities of their schools and their classroom difficulties. Teachers claimed:

The duration of training is not enough to cover all the aspects that we expect to discuss. I think a 3-day or 5-day training is insufficient. As you know we have many problems in our schools and classroom. We need to talk about these problems in the training programmes. They [teacher educators] are providing us with training but not considering our problems. I think it is not realistic (Kader).

I think training programmes' duration is not sufficient. In the training programmes they [teacher educators] do not even take into account the problems and difficulties we face in the classroom teaching. I think training programmes should be realistic about our problems and difficulties in the schools and in the classrooms (Alom).

Findings suggested that English teachers' in-service training was insufficient. It also appeared that the majority of teachers remained untrained, let alone retrained. Moreover, the training they received focused only a little on school and classroom difficulties. Interview data further reported that the teachers' training programmes that they experienced were short and their monitoring and evaluation process was substandard. It is obvious that the lack of these opportunities brought constraints to implementing CLT classroom instruction.

#### **6.4 Lack of opportunities for input into policy making**

Teachers reported that lack of opportunities to share and exchange their views and experiences with other colleagues, course designers and materials writers was an obstacle to implementing quality teaching. Teachers wanted to see their opinions at the policy level. But interviews with teachers revealed that their problems and limitations were not accounted for in the planning of any innovation, which perhaps undermined their confidence. Teachers are considered key role players in the implementation stage of educational change, but it appeared that they never got any opportunities, like participation in cluster meetings and workshops, to talk about their problems and difficulties. Teachers further reported that they are not called to give their opinions of the process of educational innovation. There is no consultation and their problems and difficulties have not been taken into account when a new teaching approach is adopted. They unanimously claimed it was top-down and imposed on them. Teachers reported,

We are working in the schools. It is our duty to practice and implement the new teaching approaches at the grass-root level proposed by the government. But it is a

great pity that we do not have the opportunities to talk about the problems and difficulties that we face practically in school and in our personal life. I think, we know better than anybody else about the practicalities; I mean about the school, about our students, their problems, our problems and our limitations. But nobody is ready to hear us. It's kind of imposed on us (Shafiq).

We do not have opportunities to attend seminars and workshops. If we have these opportunities we could discuss our problems and experiences regarding CLT practice that we face in the classroom. We could also exchange our views and ideas about CLT practices. If we could attend workshops among other teachers from other schools, I believe this could help us implementing CLT methods in the class (Kader).

Findings suggested that teachers expected opportunities to attend workshops or seminars to share their views and opinions with other teachers, and module and material writers. They also revealed that they wanted regular training, and its monitoring and evaluation for further feedback and suggestions. However, most teachers remained deprived of these opportunities. This made the way difficult for them to implement CLT. Hamid (2011) claims that in Bangladesh teachers do not get any opportunity to attend seminars and workshops that could help to develop their professional skills, which is a cause of teachers' perceived difficulties.

## **6.5 Lack of English skills: teachers and students**

This category focused on the lack of English language skills from both teachers' and students' perspectives, as this is one of the major perceived pedagogical difficulties. None of the teachers that I observed have a degree either in English literature or English language (see Chapter 5). Interviews with teachers unanimously reported that lack of English skills impedes implementing CLT in the class. Teachers reported:

I do not have a degree in English literature or language or any training either in ELT or CLT. And because of this, I do not have enough command over English language skills. To be honest, I had little opportunity to learn about CLT. It is a problem for me. But I try to practice CLT (Belal).

I do not have any qualification in English language. My knowledge in English is very limited. I am strong in English grammar, but truly speaking, I have weaknesses in English skills. I face problems if I speak English in the class. How can I conduct the class in English? (Shafiq).

It is true that we have limited English skills and knowledge. I think as an English teacher I should have good English skills so that I can teach my students. My English is not so good. I cannot speak well in English in the class. This is frustrating for me. I think a limited English skill is a problem to use CLT techniques in the class (Alom).

In addition, teachers also reported that students asked about English culture, English songs and English films in the class. They wanted to know about the practical use of English in English-speaking cultures. One of the teachers claimed that because of his lack of knowledge about English culture, songs and films, he could not talk about this. The teacher reported:

I finished my graduation and post-graduation recently from a university. I am the first university graduate who is teaching here. I think this may be the reason why students expect more to me. In the English class students want to know about English people and their culture. As you know I do not have any degree in English literature or English language. I have limited knowledge about this subject, I cannot answer their questions, which is frustrating. I discourage my students to ask me this type of question. To be honest, I do not feel comfortable to speak English in the class because of my weakness in English skills (Noyon).

Apart from teachers' lack of English skills, in interviews teachers unanimously claimed that students' low proficiency in English was another obstacle in using CLT in the class. Teachers reported:

When I ask a student, 'what does your father do?' the student cannot answer but when I ask তোমার বাবা কি করেন?, the student can answer the question. You see, they cannot even understand this type of basic structure, how can I use English in the classroom (Alom).

This is a rural school and our students' socio-economic status is very poor; they do not even know good Bangla (Mother tongue). The students cannot ask questions in Bangla in the classroom let alone in English. Their English is very poor. They are in Grade IX and X now, but they don't have primary English skills. They do not even know how to read English (Kader).

However while the teachers claimed that they couldn't use English in the class because of students' poor English skills, the students explained this situation in a different way:

If our teachers use English in the class, we can speak English in the class. We also could not practice English speaking in our primary school. If our teachers in primary and this school [secondary school] could speak in English in the class and influence us to speak, at least we could have learned spoken English. I know we might make some mistakes in the beginning but finally we can overcome this problem by practising (Group Interview).

Findings suggested that teachers' lack of relevant degrees, i.e. either in English or in English literature, caused their poor English proficiency. Interview data further reported students' poor ability in English. Consequently, it is evident that teachers' and students' low English skills obstructed the use of CLT in the class.

Many other research findings suggest that teachers' lack of English skills is one of major problems in implementing CLT classroom instruction in Bangladesh (Hamid, 2005; Hamid & Baldauf, 2008; Anwar, 2005; Hamid, 2009; EIA, 2009a; Chowdhury and Phan Le Ha,

2008; Rahman, 2007). Students' poor English is also claimed to be an obstacle for CLT classroom instruction in Bangladesh (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008; Chowdhury and Phan Le Ha, 2008). Research studies in South Korea, Japan, China, and Egypt, report that teachers' low proficiency in English is a major constraint to CLT implementation (Li, 1998; Gorsuch, 2000; Liao, 2000; Gamal and Debra, 2001). In addition, students' low English proficiency is claimed to be a difficulty in implementing CLT in South Korea and China (Li, 1998; Burnaby and Sun, 1989).

## **6.6 Inconsistent examination system**

Testing is the tool used to check the achievement of the course objectives and to assess the success and failure of the teaching approach taken. This is evaluated by examining students' performance at various levels of the course programme. It appeared that students' speaking and listening skills are not tested either in school administered examinations, e.g. first term, mid-term and final examination, or in the public examination, e.g. S.S.C. Additionally, in higher education entrance tests and in job tests, candidates' discrete grammatical knowledge, reading and writing skills are examined.

In interviews, teachers unanimously reported that only writing skills, reading skills and grammar knowledge were taught in class and tested in the examination and competition tests. This is inconsistent with CLT pedagogy. As a result, there is an inconsistency between course objectives and the intended teaching approach, and the testing system. This seems to also restrict CLT implementation in the ELT class. The teachers reported:

I know we need to teach and practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in the ELT class. We also need to test students' learning on these skills. But in our school examination system we only check students' writing and reading skills. Even in the national public examination system e.g. S.S.C students' two skills of reading and writing are tested. Because of this speaking and listening skills get less



attention. Besides, in our country entrance exams and job tests are based on reading, writing and grammar skills. And this is a big problem (Alom).

We have very limited opportunities to test all students' understanding in the lessons. We even cannot assess students' learning in speaking and listening skills. As these two skills are not examined in the examination, students do not have an interest in these skills. They want to get good grades in the examinations, their parents also want them to get a good mark in the examinations and the head teacher also wants the same for his/her students. Besides, in entrance exams and job tests candidates' grammar knowledge, reading and writing ability are assessed. As a result, I think, this situation influences us to teach grammar reading and writing lessons in the classroom (Kader).

Findings suggested that inconsistency between teaching methodology and the examination system restricted implementation of CLT in the class. Many scholars also claim that the inconsistency in between the examination system and CLT pedagogy obstructs the implementation of CLT in Bangladesh (Hamid, 2009; Hamid and Baldauf, 2008; Hamid, Chowdhury and Phan Le Ha, 2008).

## **6.7 Lack of grammar teaching in context**

This theme focused on teaching grammar in context. According to the national textbook *English for Today*, grammar teaching in context should be emphasized in English language teaching throughout the country. However, interviews with teachers revealed that they found that teaching grammar from the text took a lot of class time and it also disrupted them practicing other activities in the lessons. In interviews, four out of five of the teachers reported that they could not manage time to discuss grammar points in context. They, however, preferred teaching grammar separately in the second paper, 'English Grammar and Composition' approved by the National Curriculum & Textbook Board, Dhaka, Bangladesh (NCTB). Teachers claimed:

It is very difficult for me to practice grammar in the first paper (EFT textbook). I do not like it. If I discuss grammar in the lessons, it takes a lot of time and I cannot get time to deal with other activities in the lessons. We deal with grammar in the second part (Alom).

I think teaching grammar in the first paper (EFT textbook) is a waste of lesson time. I know we should do it. But when I discuss grammar in the text I cannot manage time to teach other activities in the lessons. I like to discuss grammar separately (Shafiq).

Interviews with teachers further revealed that teaching grammar in context is confusing and the students are also not interested in it. One teacher reported:

I do not like teaching grammar in the first paper. It is perplexing for my students and for me. I think grammar should be taught separately. Students are also keen to learn grammar separately. We practice reading and writing activities in the first part and grammar in the second part (Belal).

The majority of the teachers discouraged contextual grammar teaching; however, one teacher preferred practising grammar in context, as he believes it helps contextualise students' learning. The teacher reported:

I like practising grammar in context as the students can see and learn the use of grammar in the situation. Besides, I can have the opportunities to explain the use of grammar in the situations (Kader).

Findings suggested that the majority of teachers liked grammar practice in isolation; however, one of them preferred grammar teaching in context.

## **6.8 Influence of previous methods**

This category focuses on teaching methods that teachers were taught and applied in previous teaching. Four out of five of the teachers I interviewed were taught through the Grammar-translation method; however, one of them was taught under CLT pedagogy. It

appeared that the majority of the teachers expressed that their previous experience and practice was a problem in changing their teaching style and techniques. The teachers reported:

I try to use various techniques to engage my students in the class, but it is not easy.

I want all students' participation. According to the new method, I cannot talk more; students should talk more in the class. But sometimes I forget. My previous knowledge and experience calls me back (Alom).

I have been taught in the grammar-translation method. I did not receive any training on CLT methods. I find it difficult to practice communicative teaching in the class. Moreover, my previous experience influences my present teaching (Shafiq).

I was taught when CLT was implemented but as far as I can understand my teachers did not follow CLT techniques. As you know, I am a fresh graduate in social science; moreover, I did not receive any training for teaching English yet. I am just on my preconceived knowledge but it is not helping my teaching at this stage (Noyon).

The majority of the teachers claimed that previous traditional teaching was a constraint to dealing with CLT classroom instruction; however, one of them reported that previous methods would not restrict them applying CLT if they were provided with enough knowledge and techniques. The teacher reported:

I know it is not so easy to change teaching patterns. But I also believe that we need to know about the new approach and the techniques to use it in the class (Kader).

Findings reported that teachers were deeply rooted in and influenced by previous teaching methods that they experienced as teachers as well as students. Their orientation to previous methods apparently contradicts CLT pedagogy. Consequently, this conflict most likely causes problems and difficulties in implementing CLT in the class.

Many other scholars report that teachers' inclination to a traditional approach inhibits CLT classroom instruction in Bangladesh (Hamid and Baldauf, 2008; Chowdhury and Phan Le

Ha, 2008). In many contexts, such as Japan, Cuba, Egypt, Yemen and Malaysia, studies have shown that influence on previous traditional language teaching methods creates difficulties for CLT classroom instruction.

## **6.9 Impact of teachers' private tuition**

This category focuses on teachers' private tuition and its impact on the ELT classroom. Interviews with students suggested that students would not need private tuition if teachers taught well in the class. Students further claimed that teachers influenced them for private tuition directly or indirectly; in effect, teachers may be intentionally not teaching well so that students are reliant on their private tuition. The students also claimed that teachers did not treat everyone with equal care in the classroom; they may pay more attention to those students who go for private tuition. They also ignored and/or criticized those who didn't, which students felt was discriminatory behaviour. The students reported:

If our teachers teach us nicely we do not need to go for private tuition. We can learn in class. Our teachers also ask us directly or indirectly to go for private tuition. If we go to their private tuition, they behave nice in the classroom; otherwise they criticize our activities. In the private tuition, the teachers also give suggestions, which are more helpful for the examination. They do not behave well to those students who do not go to private tuition. This is a big problem for us (Group Interview).

You know, our sir behaves nicely to his private students in the class. His private students ask him questions frequently; they are free in the class and they can do whatever they want to do. He also asks them questions; he encourages them. But if I want to say something in the class, he just ignores me. It is not good and frustrating (Student).

It even appeared that in some cases students were severely beaten in class because they did not take private tuition from the teacher, or at least this is what was suggested in student

interviews. Unsurprisingly, they also claimed that being beaten in class was completely discouraging and demotivating. A student reported:

I hate this behavior. He is my teacher, so I must respect him. You know, I do not go to his private tuition. This is the reason he beat me in the class. I will not attend his classes. I am feeling very bad. I am just depressed (Student).

It is clear that such negative behavior can have a strong negative influence on students' learning. In such a context where students are forced to take private tuition and beaten in class, it is impossible to implement participatory learning, especially CLT.

### **6.10 Separation of female and male students**

My participant schools are mixed schools, which provide education for both girls and boys. But in one of the schools (AKZ), the female students were only allowed to stay in the classroom in the presence of teachers. They entered and left the classroom with the teachers and once they finish the classes the female students had to stay in the girls' common room. However, all the students attended the assembly class together in the school ground. I talked to both teachers in AKZ High School to understand this practice. One of them (Alom) reported that it is the rule of the school that in the absence of teachers the girls are not allowed to stay with the male students in the classroom. The teacher also claimed that the boys and girls are immature and could therefore create social problems involving inappropriate relationships. So as a preventive measure boys and girls are kept away from each other. The teacher further reported that students are restricted from staying together in the classroom due to social and religious reasons. He reported:

It is our rule that when there is no teacher in the class, female students cannot stay there. Besides, our students are not mature enough. If we allow them, there is a risk; they can be involved in an unfair relationship. This is prohibited in culture and religion. This can create serious problems in our society (Alom).

While one teacher claimed that because of the social and religious culture, in the absence of teachers, they did not allow female students to stay in the class, another teacher (Noyon), however, expressed his opinions differently. He reported that ‘I think female students should not be kept separated in the classroom. This creates problems in students’ spontaneous participation in the class’ (Noyon). I also talked to teachers in PRN High School on this issue. In interviews, they unanimously claimed that they do not like this separation as they believe it discourages students’ participation and creates a problem for students’ activities in the class. One teacher reported:

I do not believe in students’ separation during the classroom practice. Any way, this is also not a system in our school. I think this also creates problems in classroom activities. I also do not believe that if we separate students, they cannot engage in an unfair relationship. At this stage this could also happen in other ways I think it is not a good way (Kader).

During my observation in the school, I could not carry out male and female mixed student group interviews, as the female students are kept separate. Female students’ opinions about their staying in the common room were however revealed in group interviews. The students claimed that because of this system, they feel shy and diffident in the classroom. The students reported:

Actually, we do not like coming and going in the common room after every class. It seems that we are not free in the class. Besides, we also do not feel good to ask and answer questions in the class (Group-interview).

A further problem with this practice is its impact on class time. The class time is confined to 40 minutes but it takes at least 10 minutes to vacate and reassemble for the next class. The students claimed that this system wastes their valuable lesson time. The students reported that ‘we have to spend a lot of time coming and going. It is a waste of our lesson time. We have only 40 minutes for a class’ (Group-interview).

Findings suggested that female students were kept separate in the schools because of social and religious reasons and also to prevent them from being involved in an inappropriate relationship. It appears that this practice was a constraint for students' spontaneous classroom participation and also wasted their valuable class time. This type of practice in the school had a clear influence on implementing CLT in the class.

## **6.11 Lack of general educational techniques**

This section discusses the general educational techniques that they talked about in their interviews. General techniques include classroom management skills, lack of lesson plans, Teachers' guide or Book Map; no awareness of beginning, middle and ending activities in the lessons; lack of integrated skills practice; lack of interactive activities and use of guidebook in the class. These sub-themes are explained in the following sections.

### **6.11.1 Classroom management skills**

This theme is associated with the factors that caused teachers' difficulties with classroom management. Teachers' classroom management skills focus on engaging all the students in the learning process in the class, for example, to ensure all students' participation in the activities, to ensure everyone is engaged following the instructions given, to check everyone's understanding and learning in the lessons. In interviews, four out of five of the teachers claimed that because of the large number of students in the class they could not manage to check everyone's understanding and learning in the lesson. The teachers reported:

I ask the bright students in the class because I know they can answer the questions. And the other students can learn from them. Besides, our class is a large class and we do not have enough time to ask every student in the class (Noyon).

It is true that we cannot ask everyone in the class. We have many problems in the class like number of students and their learning ability. I know who can answer my questions and I generally ask them (Shafiq).

In a class where we have 50-60 students, it is almost impossible for me to check everyone's understanding and learning in the class. But I can check only a few students. I feel I should ask everyone; however, I usually ask those students in the class who could answer the questions. I know this is not a good technique but I have no other choices (Alom).

When four teachers claimed that they only asked the bright students to check their understanding and learning in the lessons, one teacher, however, explained this situation in a different way. The teacher reported:

I generally involve the whole class to check their understanding and assess their learning in the lessons. I do not ask only the bright students, because it's not motivating for other students in the class. It's true that I cannot involve all the students in a lesson but I maintain an order in the classes so that everyone can have an opportunity to speak in class. It helps my students to be attentive in the classes (Kader).

It is evident that most of the teachers only check the bright students' understanding and learning in class; however, interviews with students unanimously reported that they did not feel good when the teachers only asked the bright students. It further revealed that students were keen to participate in the lesson activities despite their fear in English classes. The students reported:

Sir always asks only the 1<sup>st</sup> boy, 2<sup>nd</sup> boy and the 3<sup>rd</sup> boy in the class but not everyone. I feel good when my teacher asks me to do or tell something in the class. But I feel bad if I do not get opportunities to speak in the classes (Student).

Though we are afraid of English classes we feel good when we can answer our teachers either orally or in writing. When teachers call us for board work we are encouraged and motivated. But when we see that we are not given attention it's just frustrating. It's true that we feel bad when we cannot answer our teachers' questions (Group Interview).



Apart from this, it also appeared that students were inattentive and distracted in the class and they did not follow teachers' instructions. Interviews with teachers unanimously reported that they tried to engage the students in activities, but they could not manage this because of students' different levels of understanding. However, there is a paradox in what the teachers said: in reality, only two teachers involved few techniques to involve all the students in the class. The majority of the teachers, however, ignored the inactive students in the class. In addition, the teachers gave little effort to trying different techniques that involve students in classroom activities regardless of whether they considered them poor, weak or good students. Teachers reported:

It's true some students were talking in class. You know, it is very difficult to operate with all those students in the class. We have a big classroom. Besides, their level of understanding is different. I try different activities to involve all the students and make them participate, but it does not work (Alom).

Yes, I also noticed that some students were talking in the back. You know we have different types (ability) of students in the class. Some students are good. I try to engage my students but sometime it is difficult for me (Belal).

Teachers claimed that large classes and students' different level of understanding were the constraints of class management, however, one teacher claimed that class management was difficult because of students' poor behaviour. The teacher reported:

I try different ways to engage the students in the class, but some students do not follow my instructions. They are poorly behaved in class. I cannot be rude to them.

I try to be friendly in the class (Shafiq).

Data suggested that most of the teachers lacked adequate knowledge of classroom management. This clearly shows teachers' shortage of pedagogic skills, which is a significant constraint to use CLT classroom instruction.

### **6.11.2 Lack of lesson plans, Teachers' Guide or Book Map**

This theme focused on the teachers' lack of lesson plans, TG or Book Map to conduct the lesson. Interviews with teachers revealed that none of the teachers followed lesson plans and they claimed lack of time and overloaded classes as constraints. Teachers reported:

I do not get enough time for lesson planning. It takes time and I need to make the effort as well. I have to give time for private tuition. Besides, I am over-loaded with classes, 28 in a week; it is not possible to maintain a lesson plan (Shafik).

I try to maintain a lesson plan but I cannot do it always. It takes time for preparation. To be honest, I do not have enough time to do this plan. I always keep busy with administrative work (Alom).

Lesson planning is good but I find it difficult to maintain it in the class. What I plan to do in the class, most of the time I could not do it, because of students' poor level of understanding. Sometimes I am confused what to do. It's true, I cannot also give enough time to lesson planning (Kader).

In addition, two of the teachers claimed that they lacked a clear idea about the nature of a lesson plan; however, they were particular to finish the syllabus in time. The teacher reported:

To be honest, I do not have a clear idea about the lesson plan. I teach the questions in the lessons. I ask students; they ask me. I practice reading and writing in the class. I give high importance to completing the syllabus in time (Belal).

I try to finish the syllabus in time. I follow lesson by lesson to my teach students. I try to cover all the questions given in a lesson. I give them writing and reading tasks. This is the way I teach in the lessons (Noyon).

The teachers are expected to be well prepared and equipped before entering the classroom. However, as seen in Chapter 5, some teachers borrowed textbooks from students and asked students to bring chalk and a duster to the class. The teachers claimed that 'It's not good but I sometimes forget to bring this stuff' (Alom). Another teacher further reported:

I borrow a book from my students in the class; I do not see any problem with that. I sometimes ask my students to bring some chalk and a duster. I know they feel good about this (Belal).

Only one out of five of the teachers claimed that borrowing a book from students in the class and asking students to bring teaching aids distracted students in the lessons. He felt that teachers should carry book and teaching aids of their own. The teacher reported:

I should have my own book and teaching aids with me. If I ask my students for chalk and duster, I think they will be distracted in the lessons. I don't like it. It is not a good practice (Kader).

Interviews with students revealed the same opinion. They unanimously reported:

Giving the book to our teachers is a problem for our own class work. We do not like it. But our teachers do it. We also do not like to go to the office room for some chalk and duster. It breaks our attention (Group Interview).

Data suggested that teachers could not maintain lesson plans because of lack of time and over-loaded classes. In addition, it also revealed that teachers' lack of a clear idea about lesson plans impeded their planning. It appeared that most of the teachers asked students for books and teaching aids but students did not like this practice as they believe this takes away their attention from studies.

Interviews with teachers and students also revealed their opinions about the TG and the 'Book Map'. The Teachers' Guide (TG) explains what to teach and how to teach it in a lesson; in particular, what skills and sub-skills will have to be practiced and in what ways. In addition, the 'Book Map' of the national textbook, 'English for Today' also presents guidelines for teachers, what skills and sub-skills have to be practised in a lesson (NCTB, 2001:i-xvi). Both guidelines are written following the CLT principles and methods. However, interviews with teachers revealed that only one teacher was provided with the TG and none of them used TG or Book Map for conducting lessons. Teachers reported:

I did not get any TG. To be honest, I have not seen Book Map yet either. I follow my own way of teaching (Noyon).

I got a TG but I maintain a diary of my classroom practice. I do not use the TG and Book Map. Instructions are not clear enough there and I am not so familiar with them (Kader).

To be honest I do not have any TG. It is good if I have a TG for teaching. I know there is a Book Map in the textbook. Sometime, I try to follow this (Alom).

Findings suggest that the teachers paid only little attention to lesson plans and classroom preparation. Moreover, only one teacher was provided with TG that provides guidelines for CLT classroom instruction. It is evident that none of the teachers used TG and 'Book Map' for classroom instruction; they, however, followed their perceived methods to teaching, which involved a little CLT instruction. It is obvious that no access to or use of the TG and Book Map creates problems for CLT implementation.

### **6.11.3 No awareness of beginning, middle and ending activities in the lessons**

This theme focused on a teaching technique in the lesson. Generally, an effective lesson is divided into three parts, the beginning, middle and ending. This can help teachers to be systemic about teaching and students to follow the lesson. It appeared that teachers practice this only to very minimal level. In interviews, the teachers claimed that they did not know about this teaching technique, and they were not familiar with this terminology. Teachers claimed:

I start a lesson asking students to read out the passage in the lesson and I then read out the passage myself for their better understanding. When I finish reading I ask students to do the writing activities in the lesson. Once they finish the activities I ask two or three students to collect their answer scripts. I can check only a few of the answer scripts. I also ask students to do work at home. This is the technique I

follow in the class but truly speaking I do not have any idea about beginning, middle and ending stage of a lesson (Noyon).

To be honest, actually my knowledge about teaching methods is limited. I generally ask students to read in the class. I also read the whole text with the Bangla meaning. I ask them to write in the class. I check their answer scripts. I ask them to study at home (Belal).

However, one of the teachers claimed that he could follow the three segments in a lesson.

The teacher reported:

In the beginning of a lesson I briefly talk about the previous lesson. I then prepare students for the next activities. I do picture work and discuss the difficult vocabulary in the lessons. I then ask students to do the activities. I also help them when they do activities. But I move around the class. I also ask questions and ask them to write to examine whether they have learned it or not, and whether they have understood it or not. I cannot correct all of them (feedback). I give them homework. But I cannot manage time to check their homework. I also tell them about the next lesson (Kader).

However, when observed, it appeared that Kader was not confident and consistent with these stages of a lesson. Interviews with students revealed that the teacher only tries out this technique in the presence of the observer, though students like this way of teaching.

The students reported:

Nowadays our teacher is teaching in this way. He did not teach us like this before. This is because of your presence in the school. We like this style. It is easy for us to learn. But we get it very rarely (Group interview).

Findings suggested that most of the teachers did not know about the technique of dividing a lesson into a beginning, middle and ending; consequently, they could not follow this technique in their lessons. It did, however, appear that a few teachers tried to follow this technique in the presence of the researcher but were not consistent and confident. It is clear

that lack of this technique in the classroom instruction obstructs quality teaching, which also hinders implementation of CLT.

#### **6.11.4 Lack of integrated skills practice**

The EFT textbook is written following the CLT principles and methods. Given the objectives of the book, the teachers are advised to teach language skills integratedly. Objectives of the lessons are defined in the beginning of a lesson (NCTB, 2001). The lessons are also designed to deal with multiple skills e.g. four major skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and the sub-skills of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation in the lesson. These objectives are allied with integrated practice in the class. It is the teachers who plan and execute activities to fulfill these objectives. It appeared that teachers used this technique only to a minimal level. Moreover, interviews with teachers revealed that the majority of the teachers were inconsistent and their explanation generally did not match the lessons' objectives. It is evident that students spent the majority of lesson time on reading, writing and listening activities, e.g. reading 30% (reading aloud 23% and reading 7%), writing 28% and listening 16%. Teachers, however, did not involve students in these activities in a true sense. They engaged students in speaking activities only to a minimal level (see Section 5.4.3.2.2.1). In interviews, the teachers claimed that reading activities focused on teaching pronunciation and testing students' reading ability. Teachers reported:

I read the passage myself and ask the students to read it. When I read, the students can hear it and learn pronunciation. I also check students' reading ability in this way (Belal).

I ask my students to read the passage in the text to check their reading ability. You know some of the students still face difficulties to read the text. I also read the passage myself so that they can hear it and learn pronunciation (Shafiq).

I try to teach my students how to read. Actually our students are weak in reading. I read out the passage myself and ask them to read so that can learn reading skills (Noyon).

In support of teachers' statement, students also reported:

In the class, our teachers read out the text. They also ask every one to read out the text. And we generally spend the whole class reading out the text (Group Interview).

Similarly, it appeared that writing activities in the classroom were confined to memorization. The teachers unanimously claimed that they asked students to write only to test their memorization of specific questions in the lessons. Teachers reported:

You know, in every lesson, there are some questions. Students need to learn these questions. In the classroom, I ask my students to write the answers of these questions. Actually I want to see whether they have learned these questions or not (Alom).

I check my students' learning in the lessons. I generally ask them to write the answer of the questions given in the lessons (Shafiq).

When teachers explained their skills practice in the ELT class, their opinions regarding integrated skills were also revealed. Before gathering their ideas about integrated skill practice, I explained it to them. But it appeared that three of the teachers were poorly informed of this technique. One teacher claimed:

I generally practice table matching, true-false questions, fill in the gaps, reading and writing in my classes. Actually, I do not have any idea about teaching many things (skills) in a lesson' (Noyon).

The teachers also claimed that due to their weaknesses in English and teaching techniques they could not apply integrated techniques in the class. One teacher reported:

To be honest, I do not know enough English and teaching techniques. This is a huge problem for my teaching. Truly speaking, I did not try this method. Besides, I did not get any training on English subject (Belal).

Findings suggested that a majority of the teachers lacked teaching methods of language skills. In addition, they were poorly informed of integrated teaching methods, i.e. dealing with multiple language skills in a lesson. As a result they hardly used this technique. Moreover, it appeared that their writing activities were confined to memorization. It is obvious that lack of integrated skills practice is a major constraint to apply CLT in the class. This is supported by Lewis and McCook (2002), who claim that lack of knowledge about CLT is a constraint to implement CLT classroom instruction in Asia.

### **6.11.5 Lack of interactive activities**

Like integrated skills practice, interactive activities like pair work, group work, dialogue practice, and role-play are also produced in the EFT textbook following the principles and methods of CLT. These activities focus on communication between teacher and student, student and student, and among students in the class (NCTB, 2001). It appeared that teachers practised these activities to a negligible level. None of the teachers dealt with dialogue practice in the lessons that I observed. This theme explained the problems that teachers encountered practising these activities in the lessons.

Interviews with teachers unanimously reported that teachers rarely practised pair-work and group work activities in the ELT class, as they perceived difficulties of lack of suitable seating arrangements, language barrier, lack of confidence, and students' poor level of understanding. The teachers also faced similar problems to manage their classroom (see Section 4.9.1). The teachers reported:

You see, our classroom seating is not suitable for doing pair work and group work.

Due to congested space, I cannot move in the class. Students cannot sit properly.

Besides, students' level of knowledge and understanding is very poor. Only very



few students can understand and participate in the classroom practice. It is difficult to make them work in pairs and groups. Language problem is a big problem doing these activities (Kader).

Pair and group work activities take most of my class time in a lesson. It is also very difficult to manage the classroom. To be honest, I am not confident to do these activities' (Alom).

In a group, students' ability is not the same. We mix up good and low ability students when we form a group. But the low ability students cannot work (contribute); they mainly depend on the good students. It is a problem (Shafiq).

The teachers unanimously claimed that doing interactive activities is a problem; however, interviews with students revealed that they liked doing activities in pairs and groups. The students claimed: 'we like to do activities in pairs and groups, but our teachers rarely do these activities' (Group Interview).

In addition, the EFT textbook gives emphasis on practising language skills in a created or imagined situation e.g. role-play activity in the lesson. In role-play activities students are given opportunities to practice language skills what they have learned in the lessons. It appeared that none of the teachers applied the role-play technique in the classroom. Before gathering teachers' opinions about role-play practice, I explained it to them. Interviews with teachers revealed that three of the teachers were not aware of what role-play is, whereas two of them seemed that they had some sort of idea but did not practice in the class. One teacher said: 'what is role-play? I do not know about it' (Noyon). Another teacher also reported that 'to be honest, I cannot speak in English. I do not have enough knowledge about English. Actually I do not know techniques of doing it (role-play) in the class. How can I do it in the class?' (Belal).

In interviews, two of five of the teachers claimed that because of their limited English knowledge and students' poor English skills, they could not do role-play activities in the class. One teacher reported:

To be honest, my knowledge of English is limited. In addition, our students cannot read English, they do not know word meaning, and they even do not know how to make a sentence. How can we create a situation to speak in English? I tried but could not do it (Kader).

In addition, in the national textbook EFT, Activity A in the lessons is an interactive activity in which students have the opportunity to talk to each other. This activity mainly focuses on students' talk and communication in the classroom. This is a warm up activity through which students are prepared for other activities in the lessons (NCTB, 2001). Surprisingly, it came into view that teachers hardly engaged students in Activity A. Only two of the teachers involved students in this activity. But even when they did, it was inconsistent and irregular. In interviews, three of the teachers claimed that they did not practice this activity, as the questions in Activity A are not tested in the exams. One teacher reported:

Actually we discuss the questions in a lesson which are important for examinations. But the questions in activity A are not for the examinations. It is actually about a picture. Students also want us to discuss the important questions for examinations (Belal).

Two of the teachers, however, reported that they involved little of this activity in the lessons because of language problems and time limitations. Teachers reported:

In activity A, we ask students to look at the picture and share their ideas in pairs. I think students need to talk in English when doing this activity. I tried to do this activity but during this activity, students talk in Bangla as they face difficulties in English. And I need to talk in Bangla as well. English instruction is also a problem. As you know we have only 40 minutes for an English class. I think this time slot is also not enough to do all the activities in the lesson (Kader).

We have 40 minutes for an English class. To be honest, it is very difficult to do all the activities. I need about 10-15 minutes only to practice activity A. How could I manage other activities in the lessons? Besides, we are asked to do this activity in

English. So language is a big problem for us. It is very difficult to practise this activity (Alom).

Interviews with students also reported that teachers rarely practised this activity despite the fact that they like and enjoy this activity. They further said that they use Bangla doing this activity, but they could have improved their English if they had the opportunity to do this activity in English. The students reported:

We like this activity. We can see the picture and share what we see and understand about it with other students in the class. It is good that we can say in the class. But we use Bangla while talking, as we cannot speak in English. However, very rarely we practise this activity. We believe that if we practise this activity regularly in English, it will also improve our English (Group interview).

Findings suggested that teachers involved students in interactive activities, for example pair work and group work, to a minimal level because they encountered perceived difficulties of lack of suitable seating arrangements, language barriers, a lack of confidence, and students' poor level of understanding. My observation data also show that teachers involved students in each pair and group work activity just 1% of the lesson time (see Figure 5.17). Interview data further suggests that teachers are poorly informed about role-play; additionally, because of their limited English knowledge and students' poor English skills, they didn't use any role-play techniques in their lessons. My observation data confirm this: teachers practised role-play (socializing) 0% of the lesson time observed (see Figure 5.16). Interview data also reported that teachers hardly practised Activity A in the lessons, as they perceived it unimportant because it is not examined and because of insufficient time, language barriers and inconsistency in practice. This lack of interactive activities creates major constraints to implementing CLT.

### 6.11.6 Use of guidebook

The theme focuses on the use of a guidebook and its consequences in teaching and learning from both teachers' and students' perspectives. In Bangladesh, teachers and students are forbidden by the government to use the guidebook for the purpose of teaching and learning. However it appeared that both teachers and students used a guidebook in the ELT classroom. Three of the teachers claimed that they used the guidebook in the class to avoid errors in the class. The teachers reported:

Questions and answers are given in the guidebook. It is an easy way to find answers to questions. Sometimes I am not sure about the answer. This book helps me to get the correct answer (Noyon).

It's true sometimes we use a guidebook. We can learn from the guidebook. It helps us to teach in the class. I know I should not use a guidebook but sometimes when I face problems with questions I use the guidebook (Belal).

The teachers further claimed that they allowed students to use a guidebook because of their poor academic background. The teacher reported:

Students are poor in English. They cannot read it; so in the guidebook they find the English passage in Bangla. They also find a Bangla translation and the word meaning in it. In addition, they do not have any one at home to help them with their English lessons; this guidebook helps them. They also get answers to the question very easily. This guidebook also helps them for exam preparation (Shafiq).

Given the view of above data, it is obvious that teachers used the guidebook for teaching English in the class and allowed students to use it for their English learning and exam preparation; however, interviews with teachers revealed that two of the teachers did not like the using a guidebook as it limits students' ideas and inventiveness. One teacher noted:

I never support students using the guidebook not only in the class but also at home.

The guidebook limits their thinking and creativity. I totally discourage this. They

may use it without my knowledge. Our government also discourages the use of a guidebook (Kader).

Students also unanimously expressed their opinions regarding using guidebooks. The students claimed that they like guidebooks because it makes their learning easier at home and school, and helps with getting good marks in the examinations. The students reported:

We find the answers easily in the guidebooks. We also find a Bangla translation in it. We also find very important questions for the examination and we learn them by heart so it also helps to get good marks in the exams. Actually we cannot finish an English lesson in the classroom. It helps us learning English lessons at home (Group interview).

In summary, the teachers and students explained the reasons for using guidebooks e.g. to avoid errors, the students' poor academic background, to learn easily and for good marks in the exams, and for learning the lessons at home; however, according to Bangladeshi government policy they are not supposed to use guidebooks anymore. Given the objectives of the course, the teachers should engage students in interactive activities so that they can practice communication in the classroom. However, in practice the teachers used the guidebook, which actually focuses on memorization, and they also encouraged students to use it too. It is obvious that the practice of using a guidebook is a significant constraint in implementing CLT in the classroom.

## **6.12 Conclusion**

This chapter explains the various factors that contribute to informing pedagogical difficulties in implementing CLT in Bangladeshi secondary classrooms. It appeared that limited training opportunities to working and forthcoming teachers constitute difficulties to teaching and implementing new pedagogic activities. Low proficiency in English is perceived to inhibit using CLT instructions in the class which is revealed in interviews with teachers and students. An inconsistency is found between teaching methodology and

the examination system, and this negatively influences the implementation of CLT. It is evident that most of the teachers prefer grammar teaching in isolation which is entirely a discouraging view of CLT principles. Data further suggests that the majority of the teachers are influenced by their previous teaching methods that obstruct applying new teaching approaches, in this case CLT, in the class. Interview data reveals that private tuition practice creates an inequitable environment that discourages students from participating in the class and eventually creates difficulties to introducing CLT in the class. It is evident that separation of female and male students in the schools discourages participatory learning, which is clearly a major constraint to applying CLT classroom instruction. In addition, teachers are found short of teaching methods and techniques, for example lack of classroom management skills; no use of lesson plans and TG; lack of multiple skills practice and communicative activities in the lesson and inclination to use the guidebook that results in their poor teaching, ultimately creating difficulties in implementing CLT classroom instruction. In the next chapter I will analyze the second major theme, environmental and personal difficulties.

## **Chapter 7: Environmental and personal difficulties**

### **7.1 Introduction**

In Chapter 6 I analyzed one of the major themes that has emerged in my data: pedagogical difficulties. In this chapter I analyze the second major theme: the environmental and personal difficulties that teachers face in the classroom which act as inhibitors to educational change. Environmental difficulties include too few classes, short lessons, lack of a free and fair professional environment for teachers, large classes, lack of coordination in teaching methods, lack of English-speaking environment, insufficient funds and teaching aids, lack of support from colleagues, and lack of secure and non-threatening classrooms for students. This chapter also presents personal difficulties that act as inhibitors to the implementation of CLT methods and classroom change. These include lack of financial gain, lack of prestige, lack of fair selection and students' poor background.

### **7.2 Perceived obstacles in school environment that impedes implementation of quality (English language) teaching**

This category focused on environmental problems which according to the teachers' and students' perceptions, brought about constraints in implementing CLT practices in the ELT classroom. Both teachers and students expressed that environmental difficulties impeded English teaching and learning in class, which perhaps restricted the implementation of CLT. In the following I explain the categories of environmental difficulties.

#### **7.2.1 Too few classes**

Interviews with teachers and students revealed that many English lessons did not take place. They further explore the causes of fewer classes and their impact on ELT classroom practice. Teachers reported that a reduced number of classes interrupted the lesson plan

and course programme, which inevitably brought on problems in finishing the whole syllabus in time.

Moreover, public examinations seem to have a great effect on teaching and learning activities, particularly in the centre schools. Centre schools are where public examinations are conducted. It was revealed, for example, that classes were cancelled in the centre schools during Junior School Certificate (J.S.C) and Secondary School Certificate (S.S.C) examinations in October-November and February-March every academic year. Teachers also seemed extremely busy with examination-related work and activities, which meant that their classes were not regular. As teachers report:

You see, now we are very busy with the J.S.C examination. It is a newly introduced public exam which started in 2010. This is an additional exam in the schools. We keep busy with JSC & SSC exams in October-November and February-March. Classes are suspended for about two months in our school. As you see, we do not have enough classrooms. We cannot continue teaching during this exam time. You see, it is a long gap. Truly speaking, no one is thinking of this gap. But what we think; we have to finish the course and arrange term exams in our schedule. I think this is hampering our teaching acutely and students have been suffering. However, if we have enough classrooms and teaching staff we could have continued regular teaching in the schools. But this is a pity for us and for our students, indeed (Kader).

I think JSC & SSC centre schools have a problem. Classes are suspended for these exams in the schools. Two public examinations make a big gap in classroom teaching. Classers are also interrupted in our schools too. We cannot arrange our classes when we go for exam duty. To be honest, in our school classes are not held regularly during this time. It is a problem for overall teaching. We are already short of teaching staff; we need more teaching staff (Alom).



Students also expressed their views about the cancelling of classes. They reported that during JSC & SSC examinations, students were in a festive mood and the centre schools turned into a gathering point for parents, friends, guardians and relatives. People regularly gather there to wish examinees luck and support them. As a result, classes were interrupted and not regular in the schools. Students reported:

S.S.C examination is going on now, and our teachers go to the centre school for exam duty. Students also go to the centre. Due to these reasons we do not have our English classes at this time (Student).

We feel good about JSC & SSC exams. We go to visit the centre schools; it's like a festival. Many people go to visit the centre school. We enjoy our time there. We are not worried about classes at this time. Our teachers go for exam duty. They are not regular in the classes. We miss our classes but what can we do? (Group interview).

In addition to exam-related work and activities, classes were interrupted due to book distribution in the schools. The government of Bangladesh provides free books for secondary school students. The Ministry of Education ensures that every student gets new books at the beginning of every academic year. As a result, teachers are busy distributing books in January, which apparently causes interruption of classes.

In addition, on the day of book distribution, it appeared that classes were suspended. This was because the upazilla chairman, a political person, inaugurated the book distribution ceremony in the school. As one teacher reported:

He is the upazilla chairman from the government party. If they want to distribute books among students, we cannot but arrange a programme for that day. I think it is our waste of time (Kader).

Moreover, the teachers and students seemed slow and less attentive in January. They appear relaxed, probably because there are not many classes. In addition, students also reported that classes were not rearranged during the teachers' training programme. Students said:

Actually we see that we do not have full classes in January. Many students are not coming to the schools. We do sports, cultural programmes in January. Our teachers are also not regularly in the classes. We have to wait until we get new books. Sometime they reach us late. Our teachers are also busy, now they went to training for three weeks. We do not have regular English classes now. This is a problem for us (Group interview).

Research findings suggested that JSC & SSC examination, book distribution and teachers' training programmes resulted in class suspension and disruption which caused fewer classes in the schools. Because of this, it seemed that teachers could not get through the amount of teaching material allocated for this period of time. This had an obvious impact on teaching practice.

### **7.2.2 Short lessons**

In their interviews, teachers revealed that there was not enough time in their English lessons to cover the material required by the syllabus. They also described the causes of these shortfalls in the lessons and their impact on their teaching practice. Through observation, it appeared that teachers regularly entered their classrooms late and left before the class time finished. When interviewed, it was revealed that teachers' lack of preparation and extra official jobs was the cause of the abbreviated lessons. Both teachers and students claimed that because of the shorter classes, it was impossible to fulfill all the teaching objectives required of the syllabus. Teachers claimed:

Actually, I was a bit late today, as I had to do some official jobs. Actually, we have to do some other jobs beyond taking classes, such as examining papers, and exam related activities etc. I know this is a problem (Kader).

You see, I am not in condition to take the class today. I am very busy with my official jobs today, and I even forgot my class. Then I thought you are here and taking pains to observe, and so I came to class (Alom).

Actually, today I finished the class earlier because my preparation was not good. You know, we have so many problems: family problems, power cut, and many others (Belal).

Interviews with students also discussed short lessons and their consequences. The students felt that their English learning suffered because of shortfall in the class. The students reported:

Our teachers often come to the class late; sometimes they end it before the time is finished. It is no good for us. Beside, our school remains closed for JSC and SSSC exams. It's true; we miss classes during this period. This is a problem to finish our course. We have to sit for exams but could not learn what we wanted to learn. (Student).

You know, we have only 40 minutes for our English class. If our teacher comes 10-15 minutes late or finishes the lesson 10-15 minutes earlier, it is a big problem for our learning in the class. You see, today our teacher started the class 20 minutes late and we could not have enough time for our lesson. Some students already left the classroom as we were kept waiting for a long time. It is annoying. Ultimately, we are the losers. We may not ask teachers questions, we may not answer them in class, but their behaviour is clear to us. (Group interview).

Research findings suggested that short lessons hindered ELT classroom practices. It came into view that teachers' lack of preparation, family problems, power cuts and extra official jobs interfered with their being able to teach full lessons. It seemed that teachers' lack of punctuality and professional commitment, and extra workload, ultimately impeded CLT practice and implementation. In addition to short lessons, 'Too few classes' also apparently created difficulties in implementing quality English language education, which is explained in the following.

### **7.2.3 Lack of free and fair professional environment for teachers**

This section focuses on poor school administration, which teachers reported to cause an unhealthy and threatening environment that affected teaching in the schools. They reported that due to ministerial audit works in the schools teachers seemed worried about audit works and government officials and could not pay attention to their teaching activities. It was revealed that teachers were asked to pay money for audit works, which caused them stress and frustration. Teachers seemed unhappy with auditors' unprofessional attitude and behavior, which in turn affected their personal and professional life. Teachers claimed:

The Audit Team is coming to our school and it is anguish for us. They never behave well with us. They always demand money for their audit, which is totally illegal. We don't need any authentic documents, if we give them two lac (200,000) taka (Alom)

You know, we remain worried about this. Depending on what documents you provide, you have to give them money less or more, so, we are in a bad situation. In addition, this also creates many problems in our personal life and teaching (Kader).

We have been working day and night for the last few days to prepare the ministerial audit documents. We didn't receive this kind of checklist before, and we were not ready for this kind of preparation. This is an extra load and burden for the teachers, and we cannot take our classes now (Belal).

The bad thing is they demand money, even if you have all the proper office documents. We are also bound to give it to them. This time, they demanded two months' salary from all teachers'. See, what can we do? This is like adding insult o injury (Shafiq).

These findings suggest that government audit works brought on tensions and frustrations among teachers in schools, which apparently interrupted classes and caused an unhealthy environment in schools. In addition, auditors' poor manners affected teachers' personal

lives, indeed. Thus lack of free and fair professional environment creates difficulties for teachers attending class in general, and causes them further anguish and stress.

#### **7.2.4 Large classes**

As both observation and interview revealed, the number of students in classes is generally quite high. This has an obvious impact on the implementation of quality education. Generally, 60 to 70 students were registered for the classes I observed. In such classes, teachers perceived that the practice of CLT activities, in particular, group work, pair work, monitoring and facilitating were very difficult to implement. This perception is perhaps the reason why teachers were observed to be engaged in these activities so rarely (see Chapter 5). Teachers asserted:

You see; we have 60 to 70 students in a class. It is difficult for me to do pair work, group work, and to monitor their activities. I think in a 40 minute class, it is difficult for me to teach sixty-seventy students. It is not practical. I cannot help every student in the class. I cannot give time to everyone. The number of students is a problem to practice CLT in the class (Alom).

While four teachers among five claimed that it was difficult to practice CLT in large classes, however, only one teacher who thought that teachers could overcome this problem if they could gain enough training on using CLT methods.

It's true that we have large number of students in the class. It is a problem for CLT practice. But it is also fact that we do not have enough training on CLT. I think that if we got enough training we could also practice CLT in a large class. (Kader).

The above discussion suggested that a large number of students in a class was perceived to obstruct CLT practice and implementation. Many scholars claim that large classes are an obstacle to practising and implementing CLT (Mustafa, 2001; Bataineh et al, 2008; Li, 1998; Burnaby and Sun, 1989; Ellis, 1994; Gamal and Debra, 2001). Additionally, it

seemed that ‘Lack of coordination in teaching methods’ caused problems to practising and applying CLT in the class, which is explained in the following.

### **7.2.5 Lack of coordination in teaching methods**

In the interviews, teachers also described the lack of harmonization in teaching methods in different subjects. They revealed that it was only English teachers who tried to implement the communicative approach and student-centred methods in their classes. Most teachers, and in other subject classes, teachers generally applied the traditional approach and teacher-centred methods. It appeared that the use of two different methods in classes brought about constraints to implementing CLT. As teachers reported:

You see, I try to practice communicative teaching in English class. But teachers are doing traditional teaching in other classes. Truly speaking, students get two different methods in the class. This is confusing for students. This is also a problem to do CLT activities in the class. This is also a problem for us. It’s true; it creates difficulties to change our practices, indeed. I think there should be a uniformity of teaching methods in the classes (Kader).

It’s true; we need coordination in our teaching methods. But we have both traditional and communicative practices in the class. I believe this a problem for us, and a difficulty for CLT implementation in the class. You see, we try to practice communicative methods only in English class, whereas in the remaining classes teachers do traditional teaching. How can we practice and apply CLT in this situation? It is very difficult (Alom).

This lack of coordination in teaching practice was deemed to cause difficulties to practicing and implementing CLT in the class. Lewis and McCook (2002) contend that practicing both traditional and CLT methods constrain implementing CLT principles in Asia.

In addition, it came into view that only English teachers tried to use English in their classes while all other subject teachers used Bangla. Teachers reported that as other teachers use Bangla instructions, students expect Bangla instructions from English teachers. These two different modes of instructions were seen as imposing an environmental constraint to applying CLT in the classroom. As one teacher expressed:

Teachers use Bangla in the other classes but we try to use English only in English classes. I think it is also confusing. If all the teachers use English in their classes, it could help CLT practice. It could also be easier for students to follow CLT. I think Bangla instruction in the schools is also barrier for CLT practice. (Kader).

Students expressed that if their teachers used English in other classes, this could also help them learning English. Student said,

I like my teachers' using English in the class. If my teachers use English I can learn from them. I think it could be good if all the teachers used English in the class. We can learn English easily (Student).

Three out of five of the teachers I interviewed, however, felt that the use of Bangla did not hinder CLT practice. They felt instead that CLT practice relied on many other factors, for example effective teachers' training, teachers' English skills, and teaching materials and aids. One teacher said,

I do not think that Bangla instruction is a problem for CLT practice. I think there are also many other factors like teachers' training, teachers' English skills, teaching materials and aids etc. that needs special attention. But it's true; if everyone used English in the class it could help CLT practice (Alom).

Research findings suggested that teachers generally practiced two different methods – the student and teacher centred – and used two different languages of instructions. A number of them felt this resulted in confusion that provided a barrier to implementing quality ELT. In addition to this, they felt lack of exposure to English brought about difficulties in ELT. These difficulties are explained in the following.

### 7.2.6 Lack of English-speaking environment

Interviews with teachers and students revealed that they felt there was a lack of environment to use English in their context. It appeared that students could only avail of a few opportunities to use English, mostly in the classroom, which was mostly reading and writing, or with friends in school who want to practice English language skills. However, in family and social life, there were not any opportunities for them to use English. In addition, it seemed that parents could not help their children if they faced problems in English lessons. As one teacher expressed:

It's true that we have no such environment to speak English. Students cannot find enough situations to use English. This is also true for us. This is a problem for learning English skills. This is also a problem for our teaching. I also think this is also a problem for CLT practice in the class (Kader).

Students also expressed their views:

We only use English in the class. We have two English classes in a day. We use English for exam papers. We rarely talk in English in class. Sometimes we talk with our friends. We do not have enough situations where we can use English. We want to learn English. We want to speak in English. We think if we learn English we will get better jobs in country and abroad. We can get a good salary. We can do higher studies. Our parents do not know English. They cannot help us if we need it at home (Group interview).

These findings suggest that English-speaking opportunities are limited, and this could of course be a constraint to learning English. Nevertheless, students desire to learn English, as they believe that good English skills could help them to have access to good jobs, foreign jobs, good salaries and higher studies. However, many researchers assert that lack of an English using environment bring about difficulties in implementing CLT in the class (Mustafa, 2001; Li, 1998; Sano et al. 1984; Ellis, 1994; Valdes and Jhones, 1991; Gonzalez's, 1985).



## 7.2.7 Insufficient funds and teaching aids

In interviews, the teachers reported that there is a lack of government funds in schools and limited use of teaching aids in the classes. It was reported that the funds which are provided are spent on salary and infrastructure. The Bangladesh government gives priority to the education sector (see Section 1.2.1) but due to its poor economy, it allocates no extra budget for teaching aids like pictures, posters, maps and resource materials like audio, video, photo copier, computer, printer (Hamid, 2011). The use of teaching aids is deemed to be an integral part of CLT practice, as it helps to create a participatory environment in the classroom (Littlewood, 1981; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Brown, 2001). However, it appeared that teachers could not use teaching aids due to a shortage of funding. Teachers reported:

It's true that I find my students interested and active when I use maps, pictures, and posters in class. But most of the time we cannot use these teaching aids. We cannot use audio and video in the classroom. We do not have funds to buy teaching aids. Some students bring aids e.g. drawings, pictures their own. But I think lack of funds and teaching aids is a problem for our classroom practices (Kader).

You know, our budget is mainly spent on salary and school infrastructure. It's true; no extra allocation is given for teaching aids and resource materials. It's a pity that we cannot use teaching aids when they are needed in the lesson. Students are also suffering for this. I think this a big problem for us to practice CLT in the classroom (Alom).

Students also expressed that use of teaching aids involved and motivated them in classroom activities. It was also reported that some students created their own materials and brought them to class. However, they put this into practice very rarely. Students claimed:

We like using teaching aids in class. We feel interested in them. We can participate actively in the class. Everyone likes it. Sometimes, we draw a picture and bring it in

the classroom for practice. Our teachers use teaching aids very rarely in the class (Group interview).

Due to a lack of funding, teachers hardly used teaching aids. Lack of funds for teaching aids and materials is deemed to be a constraint to implementing CLT practices. However, being motivated, students drew and brought pictures to class, which emphasized the perceived importance of teaching aids. A whole body of research explores how CLT implementation is obstructed due to shortage of funds and teaching aids (Li, 1998; Burnaby and Sun, 1989, Gamal and Debra 2001).

### **7.2.8 Lack of support from colleagues**

This category focuses on teachers' barriers to implementing CLT practices in their schools. Despite lack of prestige in society, it appeared that ELT teachers received very little support from other subject teachers in their schools. Their colleagues apparently criticized practices common to CLT such as pair work, group work, choral practice and reading aloud in the class. It was reported that colleagues complained that CLT classroom were noisy and that they interrupted their classroom practices. Colleagues' complaints regarding CLT activities proved to be a barrier to implementation of CLT practices in the classroom. Teachers claimed:

I want to practice pair work, group work and choral practice. I try to involve students in activities; students also like it. But my colleagues do not take it easily; they criticize it rudely and claim that CLT practice disturbs their classroom practice. You see, if I receive training, it is my duty to try it in the class, but my colleagues do not like it. They discourage me. And I have to stop it in the end (Kader).

When I allow students to talk in a pair or group it's true that the classroom becomes a bit noisy; the teacher next to my class feels disturbed. They also complain about it. To be honest, it is difficult to practice CLT in such an environment (Alom).

Here the findings suggest that colleagues' lack of cooperation and support discouraged English teachers from practicing CLT activities in their classrooms. Such lack of regard for CLT practices from colleagues creates an additional barrier to implementing CLT. Similarly, Li (1998) claims that lack of collegial supports obstructed CLT practice in South Korea. Apart from this, 'Students' poor background' seems to create additional difficulties. These are explained in the next section.

### **7.2.9 Lack of secure and non-threatening classroom for students**

Students report that teachers' poor behavior and poor classroom environment worked to impede their successful implementation of quality education. According to their own accounts, students were keen to learn English; however, they did not feel free and safe in the classroom to use it or experiment with it, which is something key to CLT. Students reported that teachers' nepotism to particular students apparently caused aggravation among other students, which impeded their participation and motivations in the class (see Section 6.7). In addition, teachers' abuse of students and their resulting mental distress was, perhaps unsurprisingly, reported to prevent them from attending the classes. Furthermore, teachers' intolerance towards students' talking and activities was reported to discourage students from spontaneously participating in the class. Students asserted:

We like to learn English; but our teachers become very rude if we cannot answer their questions in the classroom. They also use mental and physical punishment in front of the whole class. You see, today, our teacher beat a student in class. We are afraid of this behavior. Many students are not attending English class for this reason (Group interview).

I like to learn English. I know if I know English I can do well in the future. But I am afraid of English. I do not feel free in class. Our English teachers do not want to listen to our problems in the class. They only ask the good students and talk to them (Student).

If I speak the truth, our English teachers behave in a friendly way with the students who go to them for private tuition. They do not behave well with us. They encourage us to go for private tuition. But my parents cannot afford private tuition fees (Student).

These findings suggest that a free and fair classroom environment is needed for the successful implementation of quality (EL) teaching. Teachers' intolerance to students' talking and activities, the special attention they give to some – but not all – students, and even physical punishment were reported by students as hampering their participation in classroom activities. Teachers' traditional and sometimes cruel behaviour resulted in students not attending class (Hamid, Sussex and Khan 2009). Evidence also suggests that students are afraid of English and it affects their English learning and performance in the examination in Bangladesh (Hussain, 2008; SEQAEP, 2010). The TQI study further reports that 'The subject being taught is also a factor in teaching style. Mathematics and science lessons generated the most positive teaching behaviour, whereas the language subjects, Bangla and English, generated the least 2007:3'. In such a context, the implementation of quality education – and therefore also CLT – is not possible.

### **7.3 Perceived personal obstacles that impede implementation of quality education/ELT**

Apart from environmental difficulties experienced when trying to implement CLT practices in the classroom, personal problems were also revealed. Both teachers and students expressed that personal difficulties impeded English teaching and learning in the class, which perhaps restricted the implementation of CLT. Personal afflictions include lack of financial gain, lack of prestige, lack of fair selection and students' poor background. I explain these categories in the following.

### 7.3.1 Lack of financial gain

This category focused on teachers' low monthly payment and poor financial status. Interviews with teachers showed that they were dissatisfied with their poor salary which they thought insufficient to meet their basic family needs, e.g. food, clothes, accommodation, education and health treatment. The data show that teachers had a poor family life and, as a result, could not improve their circumstances or provide a better life for their children. This situation was the root of much frustration.

Because of the need for more income, all the teachers I interviewed engaged in other jobs to maintain their family expenditure, for example private tuition, farming and working in small businesses. In many cases, this extra burden resulted in stress and poor health, according to their accounts. Teachers reported:

Our salary is very poor. This is noting in the present market. We cannot survive with this salary. I always have to think how to manage my family expenditure within this small amount of money. It is a mental pressure. I am bound to think of alternative ways of earning. How can I offer myself completely to teaching in these circumstances? (Kader)

You see, we are not in a good condition. I have to think how to survive. Not enough salary to meet my family's basic needs. I have to do private tuition. I cannot give enough time for classroom preparation. My son is studying in the university, as you know, education is very expensive. I even cannot think of a better life for my children. It is very difficult for me to provide their education expenses. It's a pity for me (Shafiq).

To be honest, I have to engage with other jobs just to maintain my family expenditure. I am a teacher and I am in need. How can I explain it? When I do other jobs, you see, it is an extra load and also a kind of stress. Because of this, I cannot think of my classroom practice. This is a problem for my teaching. This is also not good for my health (Alom).

Findings suggested that teachers gained no financial status through their teaching positions, and lived in difficult situations. Teachers unanimously claimed that financial difficulties presented a big constraint to classroom preparation and practice, which seemingly affected CLT practice in the class in the end. Gamal and Debra (2001) contend that poor payment also created difficulties in implementing CLT in Egypt. This is not a great surprise given that teachers face difficulties implementing CLT even in contexts where they are paid a good salary (Gorsuch, 2000; Bataineh et al., 2008; Kirkpatrick, 1984).

### **7.3.2 Lack of prestige**

This category reflects teachers' low level of social status. In addition to unfair practices in promotion and appointment, interviews with teachers show that they also lack respect in society. This in turn was perceived to have a negative impact on their personal and family life. In the past, despite teachers' poor financial conditions, they at least had a position in society where they felt respected and valued; however, during the present state of financial crisis, the teachers felt that they were undervalued in society and ignored. In addition, teachers' engagement with private tuition seemed to influence their self-respect. This lack of prestige seemed to cause complications in their teaching practice. The teachers reported:

You see, in society everything has changed, but my life is stuck. I cannot satisfy my family members' needs or fulfill their minimum requirements e.g. food, treatment, good education, clothes etc. I am not valued in society. The reason is that I am not financially well off. In the past, teachers were valued and respected people in society, even if they were poor. Now, only money matters for social value and status. I don't feel good about giving private tuition but there is no other way to survive. This is also a question of my dignity in the society (Kader).

I am a teacher. It is a matter of sadness that now I am a poor person in society. I have to live an unhappy life in the family and society. I know my problems and limitations, but my family members do not want to understand my situation. The

situation is not good for me and for my family, indeed. You see, I am working but cannot maintain a good family and social life. What a pity it is for me. This is, of course, a problem for me (Alom).

Findings from interviews with teachers suggest that they were undervalued due to their poor financial status, which seemingly diminished their prestige and dignity in society. This status therefore also inevitably resulted in dissatisfaction with their profession, which also seems to hamper teaching practice in the classroom. Similarly, Burnaby and Sun (1989) identify low status of English teachers among other problems as a barrier to implementing innovative CLT in English classrooms in China.

### **7.3.3. Lack of fair selection**

This category is associated with unfair means in terms of teachers' professional up-gradation and recruitment. Despite teachers' financial needs, unfair practices in terms of promotion and appointment were revealed in the data. Teachers' promotion seemed to be politically biased. Qualifications and seniority were reported not to play a role in the promotion process, and deserving teachers were deprived of opportunities in favour of others with connections. This inequitable appointment process unsurprisingly resulted in frustrations and grievances among teachers, which in turn, resulted in barriers to classroom teaching. Moreover, this politically biased appointment processes were reported to result in personal and social suffering. Teachers claimed:

I have been working as an assistant teacher for 25 years. I should expect to have an assistant head teacher post now. It's my due promotion, but I am deprived of it because of bad politics. My flaw is that I do not have personal and political connections. It's frustrating and humiliating (Shafik).

Our promotion system is not good. We have to wait for a long time for promotion.

Promotion is not smooth for us. This is a big problem. I am expecting something

but not getting. It's totally frustrating. It hampers teaching practice. It also affects our personal and social life (Kader).

It is a pity for us that personal and political link is a priority for our promotion. Qualified teachers are suffering for this. This is a big problem. I am expecting my due endorsement but I am not getting it. I can't express what a pain it is. It matters in my life and teaching career. But I think that the government should take care of this issue (Alom).

In addition, bribery, individual connections and teachers' political leaning seem to have become equally or more important than qualifications in teacher recruitment. Because of this malpractice, under qualified teachers are being appointed, which then also has a negative impact on the quality of teaching in the classroom. Such practices were reported to negatively affect teachers' motivation and have a negative impact on the teaching-learning environment in schools. Teachers expressed:

You see, I can tell you one thing, when an advert goes out many qualified and experienced candidates apply. But it is a pity for us, in most of the cases; applicants are selected by considering their personal and political connections. I feel sorry to tell you that the school management committee also influences teachers' appointment by taking bribes from poor candidates. It is a big problem for quality teaching. It doesn't matter for school management committee but students have been suffering (Kader).

It is unfortunate that our teachers' appointment process is also not free from politics. Local political leaders and school management committee influence teachers' appointments. We are the victims of a poor political culture. How can I tell you? Nowadays political identity is a major qualification not quality. Teaching and learning has been suffering (Alom).



Research findings thus suggest that poor processes in teachers' promotion and appointment caused poor teaching practice and a negative environment in schools, which surely also obstructed the implementation of CLT.

#### **7.3.4 Students' poor background**

This category describes students' poor financial and social background. In addition to colleagues' non-cooperation, according to teachers, students' poor backgrounds caused them difficulties in practicing quality teaching in the ELT classroom. According to the teachers, students' learning was affected by their parents' poverty and low social status. For example, students' class attendance was often interrupted, as they had to support their parents in cultivation of their farms. Their poverty and inability to engage fully in school reportedly meant that they struggled to learn Bangla, let alone English. Thus teachers felt that students' poor background resulted in further constraints to implementing CLT in the class. Teachers reported:

We are in a remote village area. Our students' social and financial status is poor. Most of the parents are engaged in fishing and farming. Students support their parents' works and cannot attend classes regularly. Beside, students cannot speak good Bangla. It is very difficult for them to learn English language skills. It is a problem for CLT practice and implementation in the class (Alom).

It is a matter of pity that most of the parents are not literate and financially well off in this area. Students do not get learning support from their parents at home. The parents cannot spend money for private tuition. Parents don't even try to know what their children are learning in the schools. It's true that students cannot speak Bangla properly. As they come from a poor background, this causes difficulties for them to learn English in the class. I have to consider this situation and CLT practice (Kader).

Despite their poor background, it appeared that there were some self-motivated students who were good at learning English skills; but this number was very small. As one teacher reported:

It is true that a few students are good at English learning despite their family difficulties. They are doing brilliantly in the class. I think they are self-motivated and hard working. Their family problems cannot prevent them from learning English. This is exceptional (Kader).

Interviews with students revealed that they were keen to learn English; however, poor financial and social status often meant that they had personal problems, which acted as barriers to learning English.

In the above, I analyzed teachers' and students' personal difficulties, which perhaps, brought about problems and difficulties to implement CLT in the class. In addition, I analyzed environmental difficulties in the following section, which most likely, created problems practicing CLT in the class.

## **7.4 Conclusion**

This chapter explains the second major theme, environmental and personal difficulties to implementing CLT in Bangladeshi secondary classrooms. It appeared that many English classes being cancelled, which creates problems to finish the syllabus hampers quality education, which eventually impact on CLT implementation. Interview data further suggests that short lessons cause constraint to ELT classroom practice. It is also evident that large number of students in the class obstructs to implementing CLT instruction. This chapter further explains environmental factors that contribute to informing difficulties to apply CLT instruction in the class. These include lack of free and fair professional environment for teachers, lack of coordination in teaching methods, lack of English-speaking environment, insufficient funds and teaching aids, lack of support from colleagues, and lack of secure and non-threatening classroom for students. This chapter

also presents personal difficulties that obstruct implementation of CLT methods. The factors are, for example lack of financial gain, lack of prestige, lack of fair selection and students' poor background.

# **Chapter 8 Conclusion**

## **8.1 Introduction**

The main objective of this chapter is to interweave all the multiple aspects of this study and to discuss its implications. To begin I will review the major findings from Chapters 5, 6 and 7 regarding the perceived difficulties in implementing CLT in Bangladeshi secondary English language classrooms. I will then discuss the implications of these findings for the stakeholders who are involved in ELT in Bangladesh, namely teachers, teacher educators, materials developers, and policy makers. In addition, I will sketch out some of the contributions this study makes to ELT. Finally, I will also discuss the limitations of this study and make suggestions for future research.

## **8.2 A summary of this study**

Focusing on the secondary English language teaching classroom in Bangladesh, this study has investigated teachers' and students' perceived difficulties in implementing CLT in ELT classrooms. Through classroom observation, it has looked closely at teacher activity, student activity, teaching resources, teacher talk time, student talk time and the language used in the classroom. Through interviews, it has explored teachers' backgrounds, training, professional knowledge, perceptions of their classroom practices and their perceived difficulties in implementing CLT – alongside students' perceptions of classroom practices. In the following sections I will summarize the findings of my study.

### **8.2.1 Findings from the classroom observation**

As my classroom observation instrument was designed with a focus on CLT principles, it was one of my aims to observe which CLT principles were practised in the ELT class (see Section 3.4.5). This observation also served to inform the interviews I later conducted with teachers and students. This section presents the findings from the observation data in this study.

Classroom observation data shows that the majority of the teachers who participated in this study are incredibly alike in their classroom practice. Typically, CLT classroom instruction should encourage students to talk in the class (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Breen and Candlin, 1980) so that they can gain communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983); conversely, it assumes that teachers talk less so that they can facilitate students' learning in the class (Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Breen and Candlin, 1980). This study shows that teachers are the ones who talk during most of the lesson time (during 82% of the observed lessons); whereas students talk only 18% of the time. This finding clearly indicates that classroom practice is lecture based and teacher dominant. Students are given only few opportunities to speak. This is an obstacle to gaining communicative competence in English and thus reflects a lack of CLT principles in practice.

Another important principle of CLT is that it primarily emphasises the use of the target language in classroom practice (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Littlewood, 1981; Brown, 2001); however, it also encourages careful use of L1 in regard to the situation and context (Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983). This study shows that Bangla is used for a significant amount of lesson time (71% of the lesson time), whereas the target language is used for only 29% of the time (see Figure 5.19). However, the type of English used in this 29% of the time is mainly related to reading out texts in English and reading out questions from the textbook and asking students to answer. Such activities do not really represent creative and communicative uses of the language. Thus, this finding indicates that English is not used frequently in the classroom, and particularly not for real communication. This is another major constraint to implementing CLT in classroom instruction.

CLT principles suggest that teachers deal with four language skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing in integration (Widdoson, 1978; Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Littlewood, 1981; Berns, 1990; Brown, 2001), keeping the view that students can practise and gain communicative competence in these four skills at the

same time (Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983; Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996). However, this study reveals that teachers spent 16% of class time reading out texts in English from the textbook, followed by a Bangla translation, with no pre-set objectives. They spent 17% of class time discussing grammar (mainly based on memorizing structural forms) and 14% of class time writing silently, having given no clear instructions to students. Observation revealed that none of the teachers practise listening activities in a true sense; however, students spent 16% of the lessons observed listening to teachers when they read the text aloud. Such findings suggest that teachers are involved to only a minimal extent in practising four skills together. This again shows that CLT is not being implemented in this context, which is clearly a restraint to the development of students' communication skills in English.

CLT focuses on practising communicative activities (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Breen and Candlin, 1980, Littlewood, 1981), for example pair work, group work and role-play, as such activities help students to use and improve their communication skills (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). CLT principles also suggest practising communicative activities like dialogue practice, role-play, pair work and group discussions so that students can practice language skills in the class that will help them to communicate in an extended community (Littlewood, 1981; Berns, 1990; Brown, 2001). However, this study reports that teachers spent 75% of the observed lesson time on structural activities. These include grammar practice (e.g. practice with tense, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, voice change and sentence construction), writing tasks and reading activities.

Data also shows that the teachers spent one-fourth (25%) of the observed class time on practising functional communicative activities. It is, however, being generous to categorise these activities as 'functional', as they consisted mostly of closed question and answer practice, and students' replies were generally drilled and memorized. Teachers engage students in interactive activities like pair work (1%) and group work (1%) to only a very minimal extent. In addition, none of the teachers involved students in quasi-communicative

activities like dialogue practice (0%) or in social interaction activities like role-play (0%) in the classes observed. When 75% of observed classroom activities are structural, this indicates that there has been only a minimal shift away from the traditional teacher-centred approaches that dominated Bangladeshi education before the introduction of CLT.

There are also other findings from the general classroom environment that inhibit the implementation of any quality education. Findings show that only one out of five of the teachers maintains the lesson time, with some of the teachers missing as much as 30% of the observed lesson time.

### **8.2.2 Findings from the interview data**

This study reveals two major perceived difficulties in the implementation of CLT in the Bangladeshi secondary ELT classroom: one is pedagogical and the other is environmental and personal.

Due to the lack of pre-service training, the practices that teachers develop often conflict with the training they later receive through in-service training. This seems to make it difficult to bring change into their teaching practice. This becomes obvious in Noyon's comment on pre-service training: '... I am just relying on my past memories. I follow my teachers' teaching techniques –how they taught in the class. I am learning from my colleagues. I also use techniques what I feel comfortable ... This is now a habitual thing for me.' Several studies confirm that inadequate teacher education and training obstructs opportunities for educational change and teacher development in ELT in Bangladesh (e.g. Hamid, 2011; Chowdhury and Phan Le Ha, 2008, and Rahman, 2007). This study provides further confirmation for the fact that whatever training teachers receive addresses only a few of their practical problems (e.g. large classes, busy schedules). Additionally, any training that they receive is short in duration and is generally not followed up or monitored and evaluated. Lack of timely, effective and appropriate training opportunities of course brings major constraints to implementing CLT.

Teachers also report that they lack opportunities to attend workshops or seminars; consequently, they cannot share their views and opinions with other teachers, and module and material writers. They say that they would like to have regular training, and its monitoring and evaluation to further their feedback and suggestions. However, most teachers remain deprived of these opportunities. This makes it difficult for them to implement CLT. This is obvious in Kader's comment on it, as he asserts: 'We do not have opportunities to attend seminars and workshops. If we have these opportunities we could discuss our problems and experiences regarding CLT practice that we face in the classroom. We could also exchange our views and ideas about CLT practices. If we could attend workshops among other teachers from other schools, I believe this could help us implementing CLT methods in the class'. Hamid (2011) also claims that the fact that in Bangladesh teachers do not get opportunities to attend in seminars and workshops is a major obstacle to developing their professional skills.

Moreover, teachers report that they are deeply rooted in and influenced by previous teaching methods. This is clear in Alom's statement: '... My previous knowledge and experience calls me back'. Teachers' inclination to stick to traditional approaches that they are more familiar with has been found to inhibit CLT classroom instruction in Bangladesh (Hamid and Baldauf, 2008; Chowdhury and Phan Le Ha, 2008) and other varied contexts, such as Japan, Cuba, Egypt, Yemen and Malaysia. For this reason, any teacher professional development activity should recognize teachers' previous teaching experience and methods when promoting new pedagogic actions.

Findings from this study suggest that the lack of relevant knowledge of and qualifications in English language causes a further major constraint in using CLT for classroom instruction. This is evident in Shafiq's comment: 'I do not have any qualification in English language. My knowledge in English is very limited. I face problems if I speak English in the class. How can I conduct the class in English?' Furthermore, this study reports that teachers view students' limitations in English as a major obstacle to



implementing CLT. This becomes clear in Kader's comment: 'The students cannot ask questions in Bangla in the classroom let alone in English. Their English is very poor. They are in grade IX and X now, but they don't have primary English skills. They do not even know how to read English'. Many other studies done in Bangladesh and elsewhere also cite teachers' and students' deficiencies in English as a barrier to implementing quality ELT education (Hamid, 2005; Hamid & Baldauf, 2008; Anwar, 2005; Hamid, 2009; EIA, 2009a; Chowdhury and Phan Le Ha, 2008; Rahman, 2007; Burnaby and Sun, 1989; Li, 1998; Gorsuch, 2000; Liao, 2000; Gamal and Debra, 2001). However, several studies show that students and teachers don't need to have a high level of English to use CLT (Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Sun & Cheng, 2000; Thompson, 1996). And the EIA approach is based on this (2009, EIA). Teachers' perceived difficulties obstruct them implementing CLT. But they use low levels of English as an excuse (they blame the students) and they are not aware of CLT techniques that can be used even when students and teachers have very low levels of English. Of course, they should be given opportunities improve their English as well. As CLT promotes the use of the target language in class, with judicious and appropriate support from the L1, it is clear that teachers need further opportunities to develop their own language competence, as well as the ability to use clear and simple English and CLT approaches in the classroom so that students can begin to understand and use the language.

Teachers report that a further way in which CLT implementation is severely encumbered in Bangladeshi secondary schools is the inconsistency between CLT methodology and the national examination system. This point is particularly obvious in Alom's comment: 'I know we need to teach and practice listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in the ELT class. We also need to test students' learning on these skills. But in our school examination system we only check students' writing and reading skills. ...'. CLT emphasises teaching four essential English skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing; however, when steps are taken only to examine two skills, reading and writing, this

indicates an inconsistency between CLT principles and the examination system. Other studies in Bangladesh and elsewhere confirm that grammar-based examination is a constraint to implementing CLT classroom instruction (Hamid, 2009; Hamid and Baldauf, 2008; Hamid, Chowdhury and Phan Le Ha, 2008; Li, 1998; Shim & Baik, 2004; Samimy & Kobayashi, 2004; Liao, 2000; Ellis, 1994).

Further issues that constrain the use of CLT in the classroom, explored in interviews with teachers, are teachers' lack of knowledge and practice of general educational techniques. Teachers' lack of general education techniques is well demonstrated in Belal's honest reflection: 'To be honest, actually my knowledge about teaching methods is limited. I generally ask students to read in the class. I also read the whole text with the Bangla meaning. I ask them to write in the class. I check their answer scripts. I ask them to study at home'. Furthermore, teachers report that they are not prepared with techniques for dealing with large numbers of students and their mixed abilities, as Alom's comment shows: '... You know, it is very difficult to operate with all those students in the class. We have a big classroom. Besides, their level of understanding is different. I try different activities to involve all the students and make them participate, but it does not work'. This clearly contributes to the constraints to using CLT in classroom instruction.

Most of the teachers in this study further report that they are not aware about the technique of dividing a lesson into a beginning, middle and ending; consequently, they do not use this technique in their lessons. However, it appears that at least one teacher tries to follow this technique in the presence of the researcher but he is not consistent and confident. This is confirmed by a student's statement in a group interview: 'Nowadays our teacher is teaching in this way. He did not teach us like this before. This is because of your presence in the school. We like this style. It is easy for us to learn. But we get it very rarely'. It is clear that lack of a lesson structure obstructs quality teaching, which also hinders implementation of CLT.

Teachers also report that they pay little attention to lesson planning and classroom preparation. For example, Kader comments that ‘Lesson plan is good but I find it difficult to maintain it in the class. What I plan to do in the class, most of the time I could not do it, because of students’ poor level of understanding. .... It’s true, I cannot also give enough time to lesson planning’. In Bangladesh, a Teachers’ Guide and ‘Book Map’ have been designed to help teachers with their classroom preparation. However, only one of the five teachers in this study report that they have been provided with this guide. This implies that a significant number of teachers are not provided with these resources and, even those that do don’t use them for classroom instruction, presumably because they haven’t been integrated into the teaching culture. Instead, teachers follow their intuitions for teaching, which results in very little practice of CLT. This is obvious in Noyon’s statement: ‘I did not get any TG. To be honest, I have not seen Book Map yet either. I follow my own way of teaching’. The absence of such plans and guidance creates obvious problems for CLT implementation.

While teachers don’t tend to use the TG or Book Map, this study found that three out of five of the five teachers do use the guidebook, which due to its focus on memorization has been discouraged by the Bangladeshi government. These teachers, in turn, also encourage students to use it (see Section 6.9.6). This is a further constraint in implementing CLT in the classroom.

Another factor that discourages the use of CLT is the practice, reported on by teachers in one school, of separating female and male students. Due to this, female students feel shy and diffident in the classroom. Teachers and students in this study note that this practice is a constraint for students’ spontaneous participation and also wastes their valuable time in the lesson, which clearly limits quality teaching and CLT implementation. This is made clear in a statement from the group interview: ‘Actually, we do not like coming and going in the common room after every class. It seems that we are not free in the class. Besides, we also do not feel good to ask and answer questions in the class.’

A final and major constraint to implementing any quality education, particularly CLT, is the practice that students reported on that they can be forced to take private tuition from their teachers and may even be beaten if they don't. At least, this is the perceived reason that one student gives for being beaten. He reports in confidence: '... I do not go to his private tuition. This is the reason he beat me in the class. I will not attend his classes. I am feeling very bad. I am just depressed'. If students are forced to take private tuition and beaten in class, it is no surprise that they are discouraged from learning. In such a context it is impossible to implement participatory learning, especially CLT.

In addition to pedagogical difficulties, this study further reveals environmental and personal difficulties that both teachers and students report. An understanding of these factors gives insights into why teachers – even those with some pedagogical knowledge – are not able to implement CLT in the classroom. Perceived environmental difficulties that teachers face are large groups of students, lack of coordination in teaching methods, insufficient funds and teaching aids, too many classes being cancelled, short lessons, lack of English-speaking environment, lack of involvement in training and policy making, lack of support from colleagues, lack of free and fair professional environment for teachers, and lack of a secure and non-threatening classroom for students. This study also gives insight into the personal difficulties that teachers face that act as inhibitors to the implementation of CLT and classroom change, for example lack of financial gain, lack of prestige, lack of fair selection and students' poor background.

One environmental factor mentioned by teachers that obstructs CLT practice and implementation is the large number of students in their classes. Many other studies of implementing CLT also demonstrate that large classes can be an obstacle (Mustafa, 2001; Bataineh et al, 2008; Li, 1998; Burnaby and Sun, 1989; Ellis, 1994; Gamal and Debra, 2001). This is obvious in Alom's comment: 'You see; we have 60 to 70 students in a class. It is difficult for me to do pair work, group work, and to monitor their activities. I think in a 40 minute class, it is difficult for me to teach sixty-seventy students. It is not practical. I

cannot help every student in the class. I cannot give time to everyone. The number of students is a problem to practice CLT in the class'. Only one of the teachers, Kader, thinks that teachers could overcome this problem if they had enough training in using CLT methods: 'It's true that we have large number of students in the class. It is a problem for CLT practice. But it is also fact that we do not have enough training on CLT. I think that if we got enough training we could also practice CLT in a large class'.

Another factor that teachers report on is that it is difficult to practise two different methods in their classes. They try to implement student-centred practices in their English lessons, but teacher-centred methods dominate in other classes and this is what students come to expect. Similarly, they use two different languages of instruction: while they might try to use English in the English class, Bangla dominates in the other classes, and students are used to hearing these teachers speak Bangla. A number of them feel like this results in confusion that provides a barrier to implementing quality ELT. This is clear in Kader's statement: 'You see, I try to practice communicative teaching in English class. But teachers are doing traditional teaching in other classes. Truly speaking, students get two different methods in the class. This is confusing for students. ... I think there should be a uniformity of teaching methods in the classes'.

Classroom observation revealed that the classroom environment is very poor. Teachers used only the textbook, blackboard, chalk, and duster as teaching aids in the class because of shortage of funds in schools. However, CLT encourages using materials based on realia like signs, magazines, advertisements, newspapers, maps, pictures, symbols, graphs, and charts (Breen and Candlin, 1980; Littlewood, 1981; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Brown, 2001). A whole body of research explores how CLT implementation is obstructed due to shortage of funds and teaching aids (Li, 1998; Burnaby and Sun, 1989, Gamal and Debra 2001). Teachers feel that this lack of funds for teaching aids and materials is a constraint to implementing CLT practices. This is obvious in Alom's comments: 'You know, our budget is mainly spent on salary and school infrastructure. It's true; no extra allocation is given for

teaching aids and resource materials. It's a pity that we cannot use teaching aids when they are needed in the lesson. Students are also suffering for this. I think this a big problem for us to practice CLT in the classroom'. However, observations showed that motivated students draw and bring pictures to class, which emphasizes their perceived importance of teaching aids. This is clear in one student's voice in the group interview: 'We like using teaching aids in class. We feel interested in them. We can participate actively in the class. Everyone likes it. Sometimes, we draw a picture and bring it in the classroom for practice. Our teachers use teaching aids very rarely in the class'.

Teachers in this study report that a further factor interfering with the delivery of quality teaching is that it is difficult to get through the amount of teaching material allocated by the syllabus. Because of events like JSC & SSC examinations, book distribution and teachers' training programmes, classes are often suspended and disrupted. This has an obvious impact on teaching practice, as can be seen from one student's statement: 'S.S.C examination is going on now, and our teachers go to the centre school for exam duty. Students also go to the centre. Due to these reasons we do not have our English classes at this time'.

As mentioned above, teachers often come to class ill prepared for their lessons. Interviews with them give insight into their reasons for lack of preparation and their tendency to cut lessons short. These include family problems, extra official jobs and power cuts. Teachers' lack of punctuality and professional commitment, coupled with their extra workload, ultimately impedes CLT practice and implementation. This is obvious in Alom's statement: 'You see, I am not in condition to take the class today. I am very busy with my official jobs today, and I even forgot my class. Then I thought you are here and taking pains to observe, and so I came to class.' The students also support this comment. One student claims, 'Our teachers often come to the class late; sometimes they end it before the time is finished. It is no good for us. Beside, our school remains closed for JSC and SSSC

exams. It's true; we miss classes during this period. This is a problem to finish our course. We have to sit for exam but could not learn what we wanted to learn'.

Teachers also report that the lack of English-speaking opportunities in their environment is a constraint to learning English. Other studies have also found that a lack of English in the environment brings about difficulties in implementing CLT (e.g. Mustafa, 2001; Li, 1998; Sano et al. 1984; Ellis, 1994; Valdes and Jhones, 1991; Gonzalez's, 1985). This is obvious in Kader's statement: '... we have no such environment to speak English. Students cannot find enough situations to use English. This is also true for us. This is a problem for learning English skills. This is also a problem for our teaching. I also think this is also a problem for CLT practice in the class'. Students also confirm these views: 'We only use English in the class. We have two English classes in a day. We use English for exam papers. We rarely talk in English in class. Sometimes we talk with our friends. We do not have enough situations where we can use English. We want to learn English. We want to speak in English. We think if we learn English we will get better jobs in country and abroad. We can get a good salary. We can do higher studies. Our parents do not know English. They cannot help us if we need it at home'.

Teachers in this study further report that their opinions are not taken into consideration regarding educational innovation. There is no consultation and their problems and difficulties have not been taken into account when a new teaching approach is adopted. Teachers claim it is a top-down approach and imposed on them. This is clear in Shafiq's statement: 'We are working in the schools. It is our duty to practice and implement the new teaching approaches at the grass-root level proposed by the government. But it is a great pity that we do not have the opportunities to talk about the problems and difficulties that we face practically in school and in our personal life. I think, we know better than anybody else about the practicalities; I mean about the school, about our students, their problems, our problems and our limitations. But nobody is ready to hear us. It's kind of imposed on us'.

Teachers in this study further report that their teaching environment is not supportive to practising CLT. They recount that colleagues are not cooperative and supportive to English teachers using CLT and this creates an additional barrier to implementing CLT. Similarly, Li (1998) claims that lack of collegial supports obstructed CLT practice in South Korea.

Interviews with teachers further show that government audit work brings tensions and frustrations to teachers in schools, as they report that it interrupts classes and causes an unhealthy environment in schools. Moreover, auditors' bad practices and demands for bribes negatively affect teachers' lives in that they cause stress and sometimes even cost the teachers financially. This lack of a free and fair professional environment creates difficulties for teachers to attend class, and causes them further anguish and stress, with the outcome that they have further negative attitudes towards their jobs. This is clear in Shafiq's comments: 'The bad thing is they demand money, even if you have all the proper office documents. We are also bound to give it to them. This time they demanded two months' salary from all teachers'. See, what can we do? This is like adding insult to injury'.

Students in this study also report on unfairness and bias that create major obstacles to learning. Students report that they are not treated equally in class, teachers are not tolerant to students' talking, and sometimes they are even victims of physical punishment. This lack of a free and fair classroom environment creates major obstacles to learning English. This study further reports that teachers' traditional and sometimes cruel behaviour results in students not attending class. Consequently, it forces students to go for private tuition for English learning and school attainment. A study of Hamid, Sussex and Khan (2009) also confirms this. Evidence suggests that students are afraid of English class and this understandably affects their English learning and performance in the examination in Bangladesh (Hussain, 2008; SEQAEP, 2010).

In addition to pedagogical difficulties, this study further reveals personal difficulties that teachers face which all act as inhibitors to implementing CLT. The factors that contribute



personal difficulties are a lack of financial gain, lack of prestige, lack of fair selection and students' poor background.

Teachers in this study report they are poorly paid. Their salary is not enough to meet their daily expenditure. Due to poor payment teachers gain no financial status from their jobs. The teachers claim that financial difficulties present a big constraint to being able to prepare for their lessons, which has obvious implications for CLT practice. This is clear in Kader's comment: 'Our salary is very poor. This is nothing in the present market. I always have to think how to manage my family expenditure within this small amount of money. It is a mental pressure. I am bound to think of alternative ways of earning. How can I offer myself completely to teaching in these circumstances?' A study of Gamal and Debra (2001) also finds such difficulties in implementing CLT in Egypt. This is not a great surprise given that teachers face difficulties implementing CLT even in contexts where they are paid a good salary (Gorsuch, 2000; Bataineh et al., 2008; Kirkpatrick, 1984).

It is evident that English teachers have been suffering from lack of respect because of their poor financial status, which seems to diminish their prestige and dignity in society. This status therefore also inevitably results in dissatisfaction with their profession, which also severely obstructs teaching practice. This scenario is very clear in Alom's comments: 'I am a teacher. It is a matter of sadness that now I am a poor person in society. I have to live an unhappy life in the family and society. ...You see, I am working but cannot maintain a good family and social life. What a pity it is for me. ...'. Similarly, Burnaby and Sun (1989) identify low status of English teachers among other problems as a barrier to implementing innovative CLT in English classrooms in China.

This study reports that lack of fair selection in promotion and appointment contributes to teachers' personal difficulties, which is a major constraint to quality teaching and creates a negative environment in schools, inevitably also obstructing CLT classroom instruction. This is obvious in Alom's comments: 'It is unfortunate that our teachers' appointment

process is also not free from politics. Local political leaders and school management committees influence teachers' appointments. We are the victims of a poor political culture. How can I tell you? Nowadays political identity is a major qualification not quality. Teaching and learning has been suffering'.

It is obvious that students are keen to learn English; however, poor financial and social status often means that they too have personal problems, which act as barriers to learning English. This is obvious in Kader's comment: 'It is a matter of pity that most of the parents are not literate and financially well off in this area. Students do not get learning support from their parents at home. The parents cannot spend money for private tuition. Parents don't even try to know what their children are learning in the schools. It's true that students cannot speak Bangla properly. As they come from a poor background, this causes difficulties for them to learn English in the class. ...'.

### **8.3 Implications of this study**

In this section I discuss the implications of this study for English teachers, teacher educators, material developers and policy makers.

#### **8.3.1 Implications for teacher educators and teachers**

This study indicates that there are several significant difficulties in implementing CLT in Bangladesh. Keeping in mind only the pedagogical factors, the following modifications would be needed to implement high-quality, communicative English language teaching in secondary schools:

- Teachers need a solid understanding of CLT principles and sufficient practical training on using context-appropriate CLT techniques in their classrooms. Lack of education and training in the new approach has resulted little change in (i.e. new pedagogical values and beliefs, classroom practices and teaching material) being realized in the classroom I observed. Widdowson argues that 'Teacher education provides for the initiative of invention whereby actuality can be variously

interpreted and changed.... It means only that ideas both given and new will be subjected to scrutiny and not simply accepted on trust' (1990:62). Had the teachers been provided with information and training on what is given and what is new then they would be better equipped to show the required initiative and make informed decisions on what to teach and how to teach it.

- This training would focus on:
  - practising more communicative activities like pair work, group work and role-play. It would also include practising techniques in contextual grammar teaching and integrated skills practice.
  - creating opportunities for students to talk more in the classroom, so that they can practise and improve their communication skills.
  - organizing and facilitating interactive students activities.
  - reducing the use of Bangla and increasing the use of the target language.
- This study reports that none of the teachers I observed were provided with opportunities to attend workshops or seminars where they could share their classroom experiences, and difficulties and problems they face to implement CLT. As a consequence they do not get any feedback to overcome the difficulties and to change their teaching practices. They have to strategically follow what they are most familiar with. To provide opportunities for workshops or seminars is an important aspect of teacher professional development, but a serious lack of resources restrict teachers from attending workshops or seminars. This is a challenge for teacher educators in Bangladesh, who need to seek out opportunities for workshops or seminars that help teachers identify any practical problems. It is also necessary to call upon teachers and listen to them before implementing any innovation. Widdowson claims that 'what issues are from her/ his point of view in

need of clarification and regulation' (1990:66), and then give guidance to teachers to apply the new approach. If teachers are provided with these opportunities, they can discuss and share their teaching experience, it enables them to reflect on their own practice and thereby improve teaching techniques that are relevant to their own classroom contexts.

- Even though English enjoys a special status in Bangladesh, as explained in Chapter 2, it still has the status of a foreign language. Consequently, for many teachers, there are limited opportunities to use English in daily life. Moreover, all of the English teachers in this study do not have a relevant degree in English language, which means that they are teaching a language that they are not proficient in. If the current English language teaching situation in Bangladesh is to improve then any future courses designed for in-service and prospective teachers must also provide them with clear opportunities to improve their English proficiency through the subject matter. Social networking could also be encouraged and used by teachers to create opportunities to improve their English and share their experiences.
- They should be given training in using teaching aids in the lesson. They also need to be provided with such teaching aids and/or training in how to make (or have students make) relevant teaching aids.
- Teachers should have access to and be encouraged to follow the guidelines designed to support the teaching of the national school curriculum for English, for example the Teachers' Guide or the Book Map. They should also be discouraged from using the guidebook and, in turn, also discourage students from using it.
- In addition to increased knowledge of CLT, teachers need familiarity with student-centred teaching methods and training in the use of general teaching techniques (e.g. stages of a lesson). Richards and Rogers argue that:

Curriculum changes are of many kinds. They may affect teachers' pedagogical values and beliefs, their understanding of the nature of language or second language learning, or their classroom practices and uses of teaching materials (2001:246).

- Teachers should also have training in creating a friendly and participatory environment in the class, which would encourage participation and creativity.
- Teachers should have training in how to involve students of all abilities and backgrounds in their lessons.
- Finally, teachers should be required to attend their classes and stick to their timetables.

### **8.3.2 Implications for material developers**

Considering the fact that English teachers in Bangladesh are generally lacking in opportunities to attend teacher training programmes, workshops or seminars, teaching tools like the Book Map and TG have to be relied on for implementing CLT. However, as we have seen, many teachers do not have access to these resources and even those that do don't use them. This may be due to their low levels of English, as both books are written in English. This study further reveals that teachers' language proficiency is another factor that restricts them from implementing CLT. Much ELT methodology has been developed in countries where teachers' language proficiency is not an issue. The linguistic environment in Bangladesh, where English is not an official language, is not conducive to keeping teachers' English skills at an optimum level. Thus, material developers should understand teachers' capacity and develop materials appropriately; they should also take teachers' language proficiency into account, making such material in Bangla, for example, thus enabling the teachers to be more able to implement the methodology. They should also guide teachers towards other relevant sources to widen the range of teaching materials.

### **8.3.3 Implications for policy makers**

The implementation of a new teaching approach is intended to meet a social need, and it is understandable that policy makers should be sensitive to what is happening in the global ELT domain. However, this does not mean that they should simply copy or follow the trend. Any policy made should be practical and applicable locally. Further innovation made for ELT in Bangladesh should take the following aspects into account:

#### **1. Students**

This study reports that despite students' poor English skills, poor socio-economic status, they are very enthusiastic to learn English, as they believe this may change their life in the future. But teachers' poor classroom behaviour is one of the major constraints for them to learn English. Policy makers should strive to ensure a conducive and friendly learning environment in the schools. They should also provide equal opportunities i.e. teacher, teaching materials, teaching environment for all students regardless of urban and rural area. Policy makers should also think about students' poor background and take necessary measure to ensure their participation and learning in the schools through an extension of the current bursary system for disadvantaged students.

#### **2. Teachers**

CLT has been adopted as the teaching methodology for the teachers to apply. This study reports many difficulties that impede implementing CLT instruction in the class. This approach can never be fully implemented until these problems are resolved. Policy makers should take appropriate measures so that teachers can have sufficient opportunities to receive adequate training, to gain knowledge of CLT and its techniques; improve English proficiency, additionally, they have to secure their financial gain, social status and supportive environment in the school. Moreover, policy makers should take into account teachers' free and fair professional environment like promotion and recruitment processes. They should ensure training facilities for in-service and future teachers to ensure sustainable innovation. It is also important to involve teachers in discussions when a new

teaching methodology is implemented. Policy makers should consider a standard teacher-student ratio so that teaching and learning can take in a productive class-size environment. They further need to improve monitoring systems to ensure classes are conducted properly and adequately in the schools. Moreover, the programme should be realistic in terms of duration and practicalities in the classrooms and schools.

This study reports an inconsistency between the existing examination system and CLT pedagogy that seriously affects CLT implementation in the class. It is essential to have an appropriate examination system with pedagogy adopted for its successful implementation. Policy makers should think of the examining process when implementing a new teaching approach. Greater efforts should be made to explore a teaching methodology that can be realistically implemented in Bangladesh. Besides, policy makers recognizing that teachers' low salaries coupled with JSC and SSC demands lead to a strong reliance on private tuition from both teachers and students. This has a major impact on classroom practice and needs to be acknowledged and acted upon by policy makers.

## **8.4 The contribution of this study**

This study of the teachers' and students' perceived difficulties implementing CLT at secondary education in Bangladesh, investigating teacher and student activity, has provided a unique insight into the key factors that restrain the effective adoption of CLT inside the classroom and the complicated influences in this particular setting. This study contributes to ELT and applied linguistics in the following domains:

- I) The detailed analysis of classroom observation data, teachers' pedagogical difficulties, and environmental and personal difficulties has filled a gap in the international ELT literature, providing a novel empirical study from Bangladesh.
- II) The methodology applied in this study is a recent approach in ELT research, used to the best of my knowledge for the first time in a Bangladeshi context. Researchers could make

use of this methodology for further study in Bangladesh and elsewhere in the ELT world.

The study is therefore a contribution to national and international contexts.

III) Few studies have been carried out on ELT in the Bangladesh context, in particular about CLT implementation. The existing literature (e.g. Hamid and Baldauf, 2008; Nath et al., 2007; Anwar, 2005; Hamid, 2009; Chowdhury and Phan Le Ha, 2008; Nath et al., 2007; Rahman, 2007; Hamid, 2010; Hassan, 2011) suggests an examination system that is inconsistent with CLT pedagogy, lack of teacher training and language skills, and an orientation to traditional grammar-translation method are the major problems of introducing CLT in Bangladesh. As mentioned in Chapter 6 & 7, taking into account both teacher and student perspectives, my study suggests a more complex picture with regard to factors that impede CLT classroom instruction. This study identifies two major difficulties, not only pedagogical but also environmental and personal difficulties.

IV) This study contributes to the debate in applied linguistics on the understanding of cross cultural phenomena in English language teaching by suggesting factors that should be considered when analysing why CLT implementation may not be fully successful in countries which may be similar or different to Bangladesh.

## **8.5 Limitations in this study and suggestions for future research**

As I prepare to finish this thesis, I am able to reflect on my research journey and identify some limitations of this study. These limitations lead me to offer some suggestions for future research.

As I mentioned in Chapter 4, I considered video recordings when I gathered classroom data, but unfortunately, I could not use video because a) it proved to be too intrusive on teachers' normal practice b) female students rejected this idea and the study needed to consider the experience of all students. My presence with a semi-open instrument to record classroom activities was relatively unobtrusive and arguably had less effect on the interactions than video recordings would have. However, future research on classroom



interaction may consider having video recordings as supplements and thus could analyse the data from additional perspectives giving more insight into classroom interaction.

As discussed in Chapter 4, this research is to present an in-depth understanding of current practices in ELT at secondary level in Bangladesh. Therefore my data was collected at two schools in a rural area. Further study on ELT in Bangladesh could perhaps gather data from both urban and rural areas in order to present a comparative picture of the implementation of CLT.

Since the study is about teachers' and learners' perceived difficulties in implementing CLT at secondary level education, the data would have been richer had I the chance to interview the head teachers, who are responsible for the distribution of courses among teachers and as a guardian for students. Any further research on teaching methodology should consider interviewing head teachers who have experience and knowledge about the problems and difficulties in teaching English in the schools.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, none of the English teachers in this study have a relevant degree in English; moreover no one received any training on CLT. To date there has been no study of the impact of English teachers' education and qualification in teaching and learning English in Bangladesh. This is a topic truly worth investigating. Another topic that could also be interesting to investigate is that of material production and its delivery in Bangladesh.

## **8.6 Concluding remark**

This thesis has set out the perceived difficulties in implementing CLT and the factors that contribute to these difficulties in a specific context. A review of the most recent teaching methodology suggests that Bangladesh intends to continue promoting the use of CLT techniques in the ELT classroom. However, classroom data analysis reveals several difficulties both from teachers' and students' perspectives in applying CLT pedagogy in the Bangladeshi context. Interviews with students reveal that they like CLT methods and

student-centred approaches, as they realize that they might offer them a good command of English for higher studies, foreign jobs and business. Their enthusiasm to learn English causes great challenges to their teachers and changes to classroom practice would seem to be inescapable. However, there seems to be a long way to go before that change can actually happen. I hope this thesis can make teachers, policy makers, curriculum designers and material developers reflect on what has gone before and what needs to be done in the future to make the innovation possible.

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## Appendix I: Head teacher informed consent form



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**A study of English language teaching and learning practice in Bangladesh**

### **Invitation to participate in a research study**

Dear [Head Teacher's name],

I wish to invite your school to take part in the research study mentioned above. Please read this consent form carefully as it provides information about what the research is about, and what your participation will involve.

The purposes of the study are to look at classroom practice in relation to the English language teaching and learning to explore the perceived difficulties of teachers' and

learners' in implementing English language teaching at Secondary School Education in Bangladesh.

This research study is an exciting opportunity to share your school's experiences about English classroom interaction. For collecting data the researcher will follow a questionnaire survey for teachers, classroom observation, semi-structured interview for teachers and students and focus group interview for students. The researcher will observe English language class but it will be recorded. The interview session for a teacher and for a learner may last approximately 45 minutes and these will be recorded using a digital recorder. A number of five students will be invited for a focus group interview, which will be recorded digitally and it may last approximately for an hour. There is no anticipated risk, or benefit for the participants in this study. However, your agreement for the study will be highly appreciated as your teachers and students will certainly contribute to developing the English Language Teaching at secondary school education in Bangladesh, and will thus play a role in nation building.

Your school's participation in the research is completely voluntary. Therefore, if you choose not to participate, and decide to withdraw from the study, you can do so at any time without having to give any reason for your decision. Withdrawing from the research also involves withdrawing consent for use of the data.

Your school's identity, and the responses collected from anyone in your school, will be kept strictly confidential. Information collected from them either in electronic, or other format, will be kept private and stored securely, and only the researcher and his supervisors will have access to it. This material may be quoted in reporting the research findings but the school's name, your name and the name of anyone at the school or other personal information will not be revealed.

We hope that you are interested in the research. Should you require any further information regarding the research project, and have any other queries related to this research, please feel free to contact the researcher at the email address, or phone number, above.

Alternatively, you can contact my supervisors Mr. FRJ Banks [F.Banks@open.ac.uk](mailto:F.Banks@open.ac.uk),  
Dr EJ Erling [E.J.Erling@open.ac.uk](mailto:E.J.Erling@open.ac.uk) and Clare Woodward  
[C.E.Woodward@open.ac.uk](mailto:C.E.Woodward@open.ac.uk)

**Statement of Consent**

I have read and understood the above information, and hereby voluntarily agree to participate in this research.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Please retain a copy of this consent form for your records and reference.

## Appendix II: Participant teacher informed consent form



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A study of English language teaching and learning practice in Bangladesh

### **Invitation to participate in a research study**

Dear [participant's name],

I wish to invite you to take part in the research study mentioned above. Please read this consent form carefully as it provides information about what the research is about, and what your participation will involve.

The purposes of the study are to look at classroom practice for teaching and learning English language to explore the perceived difficulties of teachers' and learners' in implementing English language teaching at Secondary School Education in Bangladesh.

This research study is an exciting opportunity to share your experiences about English classroom interaction. For collecting data the researcher will follow a questionnaire survey, classroom observation, semi-structure interview for teachers and students and focus group interview for students. The researcher will observe your English class and it will be recorded. The interview session with you may last approximately 45 minutes and this will be recorded using a digital recorder. There is no anticipated risk, or benefit for the participants in this study. However, your involvement in and input to the study will be highly appreciated as they will certainly contribute to developing English Language Teaching at secondary school education in Bangladesh, and will thus play a role in nation building.

Your participation in the research is completely voluntary. Therefore, if you choose not to participate, and decide to withdraw from the study, you can do so at any time without having to give any reason for your decision. Withdrawing from the research also involves withdrawing consent for use of the data.

Your identity, and the responses collected from you, will be kept strictly confidential. Information collected from you either in electronic, or other format, will be kept private and stored securely, and only the researcher and his supervisors will have access to it. This material may be quoted in reporting the research findings but your name and personal information will not be revealed.

Before submitting the final report on the research, the summary of research findings will be provided to you, to have the opportunity to verify that your responses have been correctly interpreted.

We hope that you are interested in the research. Should you require any further information regarding the research project, and have any other queries related to this research, please feel free to contact the researcher at the email address, or phone number, above.



Alternatively, you can contact my supervisors Mr. FRJ Banks F.Banks@open.ac.uk ,  
Dr EJ Erling E.J.Erling@open.ac.uk and Clare Woodward  
C.E.Woodward@open.ac.uk

**Statement of Consent**

I have read and understood the above information, and hereby voluntarily agree to participate in this research.

Participant’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Please retain a copy of this consent form for your records and reference.

## A. SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of the school:

Establishment date:

School type: Government ☐ Non-government ☐ Private ☐

Boys ☐ Girls ☐ Mixed ☐

District: \_\_\_\_\_ Upazila: \_\_\_\_\_

Union council:

Village:

Total students :  Male  Female

Total teachers :  Male  Female

Total English teachers:  Male  Female

Number of students in IX:  Male  Female

Numbers of students in X:  Male  Female

Class load in a week:

Class duration:

Do you have electricity in your school? Yes ☐ No ☐

## B. TEACHER INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Monthly income: \_\_\_\_\_

What subjects do you currently teach?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Teaching years

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Training received in

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

How many years have you been a teacher of English?

When you studied at school did your teacher use the Communicative Approach?

Yes / No

## EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

Qualifications(Post HSC)	Main subjects	Awarding College/University	Year

**Additional Teacher Training** (Give details e.g. under which project and date)

1.

2.

**C. Please read the following statements carefully and tick only in one box that best suits your opinion:**

No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I frequently teach my students grammar rules in isolation so that they can learn them by heart.					
2	Communication is the main focus in my English class; however I discuss grammar when necessary.					
3	I often design classroom activities that require students to interact in English.					
4	I frequently allow my students to talk more than I in the classroom.					
5	I seldom listen and respond to my students in the classroom.					
6	I often correct my students' errors in class					
7	I mostly use Bangla language in the classroom.					
8	My students rarely speak in English in the classroom.					

No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9	I seldom use a lesson plan for my classes.					
10	I often set homework assignment for my students					
11	I seldom get time to check and give feedback on students' homework assignment					
12	I regularly use teaching aids, such as songs, posters, maps, audio, & video in my classroom practice					
13	I always respond to learners' questions, and their problems in the classroom.					
14	I never practice pair and group work activities in the classroom.					
15	I regularly monitor while students doing pair work and group work					
16	I always try to ensure every students' participation in the classroom activities					
17	My role in the language classroom is to impart knowledge through activities such as explanation, writing, and example.					
18	I never get time to think and to reflect over classes I've taught in order to change in my teaching techniques.					
19	I have little time to create new materials for classroom use.					
20	I am always friendly and helpful with my students					
21	I never learn from my students and never take their comments and suggestions to improve my lesson.					
22	CLT means teaching language for communication.					
23	It is impossible in a large class of students to organize activities that suit the needs of all					

No	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
24	Group work activities take a long time to organizing and waste a lot of valuable teaching time.					
25	Mastering grammar rules is a must for students to be competent in communication skills.					
26	A language class should be communication focused					
27	It is important to practice English in a real-life or in a real-life like situation					
28	I believe Bangla should be frequently used in my English class for my students' better understanding of the lessons					
29	Task and activities should be negotiated and adapted to suit the learners' needs rather than imposed on them.					
30	Languages are learned mainly through communication, with grammar rules explained when necessary					
31	Learning English is learning its grammar rules					
32	Learning English is learning to use the language					
33	English is useful in getting a job					
34	My deficiency in spoken English is problem for implementing good English language teaching					
35	Students' low English proficiency is an obstacle for implementing good English language teaching					
36	Students' passive styles of learning is an obstacle for implementing good English language teaching					
37	Students' socio-economic status is a problem for students' English language learning					
38	Grammar-based examinations are an obstacle for implementing good English language teaching					

**C. Please answer the following questions briefly (please write in Bangla if you want):**

1. What problems, if any, do you face in teaching English?
2. What is your role as an English teacher in the school? (For example, teaching, question setting, examining papers.....etc)
3. What methods and techniques are you using to assess your students' learning?
4. What are the techniques you use to engage the students?

5. What does Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) mean to you?

6. What is your opinion about Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)?



## Appendix IV: Observation instrument

Beginning activities		Yes	No
1	Acknowledges the presence of the students with greeting		
2	Ask student's where they are up to		
3	Simply refers students to a page		
4	Writes the lesson topic on the black board		
5	Recaps the pervious lesson		
6	Borrows text book from a student		
7	Provides feedback to students on homework assignment		
8	Begins teaching without explanation of what the lesson will cover		
9	Clarifies the students the objectives of the lesson		
10	Questions students about their recollections of the previous lesson		
11	Begins teaching without reference to the previous learning		
12	Checks that all students have access to the appropriate books		
13	With explanation asks students to open books at the relevant page		

### Classroom Observation Tool

**School name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Type:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Location:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Class:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Section:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Teacher name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Total Ss:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Presentees:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Male:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Female:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Absentees:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ST:** \_\_\_\_\_ **FT:** \_\_\_\_\_

Time	Teacher Activities													Student Activities										Comments		
	Responding	Presenting	Organizing	Socializing	Monitoring	Eliciting	Feedback	Write silently	Using TA	Asking OQ	Asking CQ	Discussing grammar	Allowing Ss to talk	Other	Responding to the teacher	Questing the teacher	Talking in pairs	Talking in groups	Writing	Reading	Reading aloud	Listening	Using TA	Choral response	Other	
2 <sup>nd</sup>																										
4 <sup>th</sup>																										
6 <sup>th</sup>																										
8 <sup>th</sup>																										
10 <sup>th</sup>																										
12 <sup>th</sup>																										
14 <sup>th</sup>																										
16 <sup>th</sup>																										
18 <sup>l</sup>																										

Time	Teacher Activities														Student Activities										Comments	
	Responding	Presenting	Organizing	Socializing	Monitoring	Eliciting	Feedback	Write silently	Using TA	Asking OQ	Asking CQ	Discussing grammar	Allowing Ss to talk	Other	Responding to the teacher	Questing the teacher	Talking in pairs	Talking in groups	Writing	Reading	Reading aloud	Listening	Using TA	Choral response		Other
20 <sup>th</sup>																										
22 <sup>nd</sup>																										
24 <sup>th</sup>																										
26 <sup>th</sup>																										
28 <sup>th</sup>																										
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32 <sup>nd</sup>																										
34 <sup>th</sup>																										
36 <sup>th</sup>																										
38 <sup>th</sup>																										
40 <sup>th</sup>																										

Ss= students, TA= Teaching Aids, ST= Start Time, FT= Finish Time, OQ = Open Question, CQ = Closed question.

Ending activities		Yes	No
1	Recaps what the lesson has covered		
2	Provides feedback on the way students have worked during the lesson		
3	Sets homework or assignments to be completed before the next lesson.		
4	Asks summary questions to assess student's understanding of the concepts covered in the lesson		
5	Collects students' class work for marking		
6	Tell students where the lesson is leading, i.e. what will follow in the next lesson		
7	Tell students to close their books and dismisses them		
8	Stops teaching and leaves the room without doing any of the above (1-7)		

### General impression of the teacher

		Yes	No
1	Seemed motivated?		
2	Seemed prepared?		
3	Engaged all students?		

## **Appendix V: Interview questions for teachers**

### **Teacher's semi-structured interview questions (Based on classroom observation).**

- I am happy to be in your class and learned many things. Thank you very much for your time. Please tell me, what lesson from the textbook did you just cover?
- What did you want your students to learn in this lesson? Do you think they learned it? How do you know it? Did all the students in your view achieve the learning?
- I saw you were asking questions and some students failed to answer you. Is there anything that you do to help these students and involved them more in the lesson?
- I noticed that you called some students by name, some time by enrolment number to answer your question. Why did you do this?
- I saw that you called a student for filling gap activity in the blackboard. In what ways it helps your classroom practice? Why did you do it?
- I saw you used textbook and blackboard for this lesson. Do you use any other materials in the classroom practice?
- I saw that you engaged students in pairs and groups. Is it your regular practice? In what way it helps the classroom practice? I noticed that students used Bangla during this activity? What do you say about it?

- I saw that you read out the text and asked students to read out. Why did you do it?  
In what ways it helps in the classroom practice?
- I noticed that students spent most of time doing writing activities in the class. How does it help in your classroom practice? Do you think some other ways that help engaging all the students?
- As we know there are four language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. I noticed students were engaged in reading and writing. Do you practise speaking and listening skills?
- I saw that you taught your students grammar in isolation. Could you please me about it?
- You used English most of the time in the class. Do you think all students understand your class? Is it your regular practice? What do you do for students who don't understand?
- I saw that most of the time you used Bangla in the class. Is it your regular practice?
- Could you please tell me your experience regarding CLT practice in the lessons?
- How many English lessons on average do you teach a week? Do you follow any guideline like TG or Book Map for your lessons? How do prepare for the lessons?
- Could you please tell me about examination system?

- I noticed that you entered into the class late. Just for my interest, could you please tell me about it?
- Could you please tell me about the facilities that help improve your teaching? What about your training facilities?
- What do you think it means to your students, to learn English? What difference do you think learning English will make to their lives?
- What does it mean to you to be an English teacher? Any problems or challenges?

## **Appendix VI: Interview questions for students**

### **Student's semi-structured interview questions (Based on classroom observation).**

- I am really happy that you are giving me time. I am enjoying your classes and learning many things. Was the class that I just saw as usual lesson from your teacher?
- Do you like English classes? Why? In your English class, what kind of things do you like doing most? Is there anything you don't like about your English classes?
- I saw that you did a group work activity today. Do you like it? Why? How frequent you do it? What language do you use doing this activity? Why?
- I saw that you did a pair work activity today. Do you like it? Why? How frequent you do it? What language do you use doing this activity? Why?
- Do you like it if your teacher gives you activities, which make you use English with your classmates?
- I saw that some students were struggling while doing activities but they didn't ask the teacher to assist them. Do you have any idea? Do you ask your teacher when you struggling with activities?



- I saw that teacher beat students in the class? How do you feel about it? Could you please explain?
- I saw that some students were answering questions copying from guidebook. Do you use the guidebook? Do you use the national textbook in your classes? Do you use any other materials like, audio recorder, poster, and maps?
- Does your teacher often speak English in class? Do you understand your teacher if he speaks English?
- Do you often say things in your English class? Does your teacher call on you to say things in class? How do you feel about that?
- Do you come to private tuition? Why? Do you face any problems to learn English?
- Why is learning English useful? Would you like to be an English teacher when you grow up? Why?